HUNGER IN RURAL AMERICA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING, CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIRST CONGRESS

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HUNGER IN RURAL AMERICA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1989

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,
CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room 1302, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Charles Hatcher (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Panetta, Staggers, Espy, Sarpalius, Emerson, Lewis, and Herger.

Also present: Representative E (Kika) de la Garza, chairman of the committee.

Staff present: Daniel E. Brinza, counsel; Joseph Muldoon, assistant counsel; John E. Hogan, minority counsel; Alice Devine, minority associate counsel; Glenda L. Temple, clerk; Julia Paradis, Dean Mitchell, Anita R. Brown, and Lynn Gallagher.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES HATCHER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. HATCHER. The hearing will come to order. At this morning's hearing, the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition expects to receive testimony on the serious concern of hunger in rural America. Many people seem to view poverty and hunger as an urban problem, the problem of inner cities. It has been suggested that the Federal nutrition programs were structured with the urban poor rather than the rural poor in mind, but in some rural areas in our country, 30 to 40 percent of the people live in poverty. One out of every four children in rural America is poor. And indications are that poverty in rural America is increasing.

There are almost 10 million people now living in poverty in rural America, and all too often poverty results in hunger. If people cannot get enough to eat or are unable to obtain a nutritious diet, they will be burdened with poor health and their children will suffer from stunted growth.

It is especially difficult for the rural poor to obtain enough food, and nutritious food. Great distances sometimes hamper access to sources of nutritious foods and make it difficult for people to take advantage of programs designed to help them eat better. For example, the local food stamp office may not be "local" enough, not close enough, for people who do not have adequate transportation and must travel many miles to the nearest town. Food bought in the

small grocery stores in the most rural regions is more expensive than food from the large supermarkets in more heavily populated areas.

We must know and understand the causes of hunger in rural America to ensure that our nutrition programs are responsive to the unique needs of poor people in our rural communities. We appreciate the appearance this morning of the witnesses and through their testimony we expect to gather information about who the rural poor are, what programs currently address the nutritional needs of the rural poor; why there is hunger still in rural America; and what can be done to alleviate hunger and provide a nutritious diet to all poor Americans.

At this point I would like to call on Congressman Bill Emerson, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, for any opening remarks he may have.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BILL EMERSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Mr. EMERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want first of all to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate you on your election to be chairman of the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition. I welcome this opportunity to work closely with you on the issues under the jurisdiction of our subcommittee. We have worked together as members of the committee, and I am confident that the good relationship that we have developed there will continue as we consider matters before this subcommittee. So please accept my very best wishes for every success in your chairmanship.

I am pleased that this subcommittee is having its first hearing on the subject of rural America and the needs of families living in those parts of the United States. It is important for the subcommittee to review the USDA food assistance programs and to make sure that needy families have access to these programs. I represent a very rural district, and I know that there are many unique problems that arise, particularly relating to transportation and the availability of food assistance programs.

In addition, there are many ways in which rural communities respond to the needs of their neighbors which are also unique. Our hearing will provide an opportunity to hear from those people involved with rural food assistance programs. I firmly believe that in our Nation of abundance, it is a tragedy for one child, one elderly person, or anyone to go hungry. We are a generous country, and if the programs that we now operate do not provide the necessary help, we have got to know why.

This hearing will help provide the answers. The witnesses appearing before the subcommittee today will report on the programs available through the USDA for food assistance. In addition, two of the subcommittee's witnesses have prepared extensive studies on the issue of the rural poor, focusing in part on the issues of transportation and housing. I look forward to hearing from both of them. I was interested in reading another recent report based on the latest Census Bureau data in which it was found that rural

poor are more likely to live in homes with both parents who are working.

In addition, rural poor are also more likely to be elderly. This data raises some questions concerning whether food assistance and other programs for needy families are designed more with the urban poor in mind. I hope our witnesses will respond to this issue. I recently had a visit from some of my constituents who operate a community action agency in a small rural town. They commented that rural elderly poor are less likely to apply for food stamp benefits because of the paperwork involved and the stigma attached to applying for and using food stamps.

Their participants were much more likely to want and to receive the commodities through TEFAP. As some of you may remember, last year we were successful in passing the Hunger Prevention Act. One of the provisions of the act authorized $120 million each year for 1989 and 1990 for TEFAP and another authorized a total of $112 million over a 3-year period, for the purchase of commodities for food banks and soup kitchens.

Now I am an ardent advocate of commodity distribution programs, particularly those operated by food banks. I believe this is an efficient, effective means by which we can provide food to needy people. My visitors believed that the rural elderly poor were able to benefit from TEFAP much more readily than from food stamps. Perhaps this means that we should improve the Food Stamp Program so that it is accessible to the rural poor or expand TEFAP since that is known to be a successful program.

I will be interested in hearing comments from our witnesses on that subject. Our witnesses representing Second Harvest may wish to comment on this matter. I welcome all of our witnesses and am anxious to hear their views on the matters before us today. Mr. Chairman, before we proceed, I would like to say that I am going to have to be in and out of here. As you know, scheduling is one of the most difficult things we face in Congress. I did not know at the time this hearing was scheduled that the President was going to request a meeting with the House Republican Conference, which occurs at 10 o'clock today. Our leadership has decided that we should accommodate the President, and I am going to comply. So I will be in and out.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome the long-standing chairman of this subcommittee, your predecessor, who has gone off to greener pastures as chairman of the Budget Committee, back among our ranks. I certainly enjoyed working with him over the course of the last 6 years, and I am delighted he remains a member of this subcommittee. I wish him well in his very heavy responsibilities as chairman of the Budget Committee.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Emerson, and we understand why you will be out. That is certainly a legitimate excuse I think.

Next I would like to recognize for any comments he may have Leon Panetta, Congressman from California, who as Bill said, was chairman of this subcommittee until he was elected to chair the Budget Committee. We are glad to have you here with us this morning.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. LEON E. PANETTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. It is a pleasure to return to the calm and quiet waters of the Subcommittee on Nutrition, and it is a great pleasure to join all my colleagues this morning. In particular, I want to recognize Congressman Bill Emerson who I worked with very closely over the last few years on a number of landmark pieces of hunger legislation. I also wish the new chairman, of the subcommittee, Mr. Hatcher, on his maiden voyage with this hearing the best of luck at the helm of the Nutrition Subcommittee. I know he will do well.

I am especially pleased that the subcommittee is taking a timely look at the issue of hunger in rural America. Much of rural America is often forgotten when we talk about economic issues in the America of today. We forget that issues like unemployment and homelessness, hunger, and nutrition problems, and health care problems, impact as severely, if not more so, on the people of rural America than they do on urban Americans. There is always a high focus on the problems of urban areas, but we too often forget that these problems are shared by those in rural America as well.

We need to pay attention to these problems in rural America. We are a committee that focuses on agriculture and how to improve the agricultural economy, but beyond that we are a committee that has to be concerned about the people who are part of rural America. And this gives us the opportunity to focus on their concerns, their problems, and the challenges that face them.

Having worked on the Budget Committee and on the budget resolution that hopefully will pass today, we have provided room in the budget for an initiative for rural development. There is new budget authority for rural development of about $300 million, that would provide for about $125 million in outlays for fiscal year 1990 to try to aid rural communities. At the same time, there are Members in both the House and Senate that are involved in an initiative to develop the kind of legislative authorities that we need to promote rural development as well as health and nutrition initiatives for the rural part of this country.

We cannot make improvements in rural America without focusing on the human factor. That is essential to our ability to try to make sure that our rural residents have a means of providing for themselves and for their families, of providing food and shelter, and meeting the basic needs that all of us share.

If we can provide that, then I think we have a real opportunity to revitalize the rural part of this country. So it is timely and appropriate that we focus on the nutrition status and needs of rural Americans and begin to identify ourselves with alternative approaches and solutions to the problems that plague them.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I wish you the best of luck on this first hearing, and offer you any assistance that I or my staff can provide in this effort.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Panetta. Mr. Lewis, we are just having opening statements. do you have any remarks you would like to make.

Mr. LEWIS. No comment.

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. Espy.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ESPY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. ESPY. Thank you. I also want to associate myself with the comments from the chairman of the Budget Committee who is a leader of long-standing in the fight against hunger. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased with the expeditious nature in which you have convened this hearing to examine the extent of poverty in rural areas of this country and to assess the effectiveness in which Federal food assistance programs help to alleviate this situation.

In January, I was appointed to chair the House Select Committee on Hunger Domestic Task Force. Since its inception, this select committee has maintained a focus on the rural poor and their access to the benefits channeled through programs comprising the National Food Assistance network. I certainly hope that we will be able to coordinate our address of this food shortage problem experienced by residents of rural communities across the Nation.

In a recent report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities which examined Census Bureau data on rural poverty, it stated that most Americans see poverty as being predominantly an urban issue. The inner-city mother on welfare is looked on by much of the general public and many policymakers as representing the poor. In trying to address these problems, the poverty in rural America is so often overlooked. In fact, rural areas have higher poverty rates than metropolitan areas. Policies intended to address the poor often treat low income rural people and inner-city poor the same. It is often assumed that all rural poor live on farms. However, Mr. Chairman, less than 10 percent actually live on farms.

According to Census Bureau data, 16.9 percent of the population living in rural areas have incomes below the poverty level compared with 12.5 percent in urban areas. An estimated 25 percent of the population of Mississippi or 656,000 people, lived in poverty in 1985. Mr. Chairman, this was the highest poverty rate of all States in the United States of America.

In my district, the Second District of Mississippi, 43 percent of the people live below the poverty level. Almost a third, Mr. Chairman, in 1989 made less than $5,000 a year. A single-parent family with two children living in Mississippi receives a combined AFDC and food stamp benefit totaling $356 per month. This translates into only 45 percent of the 1988 poverty threshold. For those who are poor in Mississippi, eligibility for Government assistance and the level of benefits they receive are highly dependent on whether or not they are working, married, elderly, disabled, parents, or children.

Those who qualify for assistance are unlikely to even receive sufficient aid to lift them close to the poverty line. In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that the question of the poor really has many different faces and different problems. Poverty, whether urban or rural, needs to be addressed. However, programs and policies designed to assist urban poverty are different from those designed for rural poverty. So I welcome today's witnesses

and look forward to hearing their testimony, and I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Espy.

Mr. Herger, do you have any opening remarks?

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to join my colleagues in welcoming and congratulating you on becoming our new chairman here of this committee, and also in calling this hearing which affects each of us certainly on this committee who represent rural areas that are concerned with hunger there, and I am greatly looking forward to the testimony of our witnesses and I thank you very much.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Herger. I would like to recognize now the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Mr. de la Garza. We are glad to have you with us, Kika. Do you have some remarks?

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. E (KIKA) de la GARZA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for being late. I was otherwise occupied with some farmers from Georgia. I know probably it has already been said, but we welcome you as a new subcommittee chairman, and I look forward to the work that you will be doing in behalf of the constituency which you have jurisdiction over. I notice that Mr. Panetta is here also and I hope that he stays close by you. He has other pressing problems as chairman of the Budget Committee, but you follow some big shoes in this committee, Mr. Hatcher, and we know that you will be able to fill them adequately.

The subject matter today is very important. I would just like to make one comment that I say throughout all of my talks, mostly in the urban areas as we try and explain our farm programs, everything related to our farm bill and the areas that we have jurisdiction, including food programs and food stamps. I say always that we are the best fed people in the world—in the history of the world—for the least amount of disposable income per family of any other major industrialized country in the world. But then the caveat is that there are some who fall through the cracks, but it's never the fault of the farmer. The food is always there regardless of nature and the problems. But this is what we have to address. We know it is never the fault of the farmer. We know we can say we are the best fed people in the world, but we know that there are those who still have inadequate nutrition. That is the area that I would like for my statement to be a complete and total statement: That no one has fallen through the crack, that we have taken care, as a country, of all our people. You do not hear it as much now, but there was a tremendous dissatisfaction with food stamps, and its being for the lazy and the no count, and the ones that do not want to work. At one time they said if you just cut out food stamps, you will balance the budget.

That seems to have gone now—thank goodness—and so we do not have to deal with that as such. But there is some implication always that somehow these programs are for those who do not attempt to take care of themselves, for those who somehow are look-

ing for a handout. In my travels, I have seen, and as you will see, Mr. Chairman, as you handle this subcommittee, that that is not so. That very fact was presented to us here in Washington during the inauguration of President Bush. A family was found homeless, having to depend on the government, Federal, and city government, for a place to live in, and the man was working.

He was working. It is just that his pay was not enough for food and for housing. That is the kind of people that we are dealing with. He was working at a steady job, but his income did not adequately fulfill the needs of the family. They were invited to one of the Presidential balls, and there was much done to show that we cared. But this is where the work is going to be done, not taking them to a ball like Cinderella, Mr. Chairman. So that is my charge to you. See how we can work within the area that we have jurisdiction and within the constraint that we have on the budget. I think much more can be done. In reading the statements, the one that impressed me was the one from the caseworker from the State of Georgia and what we can do to improve the rules and regulations to make more adequate delivery of food stamps for those who need them.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and wish you well. We will be there right along side of you, me on one side, Mr. Panetta on the other side, and Mr. Emerson, and we have our lawyers. So you know you will do a good job.

Mr. HATCHER. Sounds like I have an easy job with all that help. Thanks, Chairman de la Garza. Next, I will recognize Mr. Staggers for opening comments.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. STAGGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a prepared statement. I would ask that it be inserted into the record.

Mr. HATCHER. Without objection.

Mr. STAGGERS. Mr. Chairman, I would echo what the chairman of the full committee said. When I look at your new chairmanship, I want to welcome you and I am sure you are going to do OK because you have Leon on your right, Bill on your left, and you do not have a lot of room to maneuver. I am sure you are going to be moving in the right direction.

I also would like to welcome two dedicated individuals who help to combat the problems of hunger throughout West Virginia everyday. Elza Wilson, president of the board of directors of the Mountaineer Food Bank, and Carla Kniceley, the executive director of that food bank, will be testifying today before our subcommittee. I welcome their input and commend them for their efforts in alleviating the ruinous effects of hunger in our society. I look forward to their testimony. I thank the Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Staggers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. HARLEY O. STAGGERS, JR.

I would like to thank the chairman for scheduling this initial hearing of the subcommittee on a subject in which I have a great interest—hunger in America, particularly, rural America.

Also, I would like to welcome two dedicated individuals who help to combat the problem of hunger throughout West Virginia every day. *Elza Wilson*, president of the board of directors of the Mountaineer Food Bank, and *Carla Kniceley*, the executive director, will be testifying today before our subcommittee. I welcome their input and commend them for their efforts in alleviating the ruinous effects of hunger in our society.

Recently, I received a copy of the most comprehensive survey ever done of West Virginia's poverty population. This survey was conducted in October of 1988 by the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity and the North Central West Virginia Community Action Association. Fourteen thousand poverty level West Virginians were surveyed and their needs assessed. This revealing study indicated that food needs ranked second for respondents, while at the same time, food stamps and commodities were ranked first and second in order of assistance the respondents received. This data points to the inadequacy of current services in addressing food security needs. People are simply not getting enough to eat.

Last year, I participated in a field hearing in West Virginia of the Select Committee on Hunger. This hearing focused upon the persistence of hunger and poverty in Appalachia. The problems of combating hunger in rural areas were highlighted at this hearing, such as the higher costs of transportation, the importance of nutrition education in maximizing a family's food dollar, the persistence of high unemployment levels, and limited economical sources for purchasing food.

While provisions that were included in the Hunger Prevention Act passed by Congress last year helped to remove some of the barriers preventing the rural poor from participating in the food stamp program, there is still more to be done. I look forward to working with the subcommittee and interested groups in exploring methods to wage a more effective offensive against the tragedy of hunger.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Staggers. I believe every member has had an opportunity to have opening comments. So we will begin with the testimony. First we are pleased to have Mr. G. Scott Dunn, Acting Administrator of Food and Nutrition Service with the USDA here in Washington. Mr. Dunn, we appreciate you being here, and we would like for you to introduce your colleagues who are with you.

STATEMENT OF G. SCOTT DUNN, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY BONNY O'NEIL, ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, FOOD STAMP PROGRAM; AND GEORGE BRALEY, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, SPECIAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Mr. DUNN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Accompanying me this morning are Mr. George Braley, the Deputy Administrator of FNS, for the Special Nutrition Programs, and Ms. Bonny O'Neil, the Acting Deputy Administrator for the Food Stamp Program in FNS.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issues related to food availability in rural America. The Department has a long-standing commitment to rural and farm communities and to meeting the nutritional needs of all Americans. FNS administers the domestic food assistance programs which provide more than $20 billion per year to low-income Americans to help meet their nutritional needs. FNS has long recognized that nutritional adequacy and the risk of malnutrition are not uniquely urban problems.

Reaching needy rural Americans has challenged both lawmakers and program officials alike. For much of the last year, members of the committee and your staff worked to craft changes to the domestic feeding programs in order to improve benefit delivery. The result was the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988. Although it is too early to see the complete results of this legislation, we share your

hope that implementation of these new provisions will further expedite the delivery of food assistance to rural recipients.

Today, I would like to present a status report on how well food assistance programs administered by FNS are doing in making benefits readily accessible to the rural poor. We know that there are some differences between rural program participants and their urban counterparts. We know, for instance, that rural poor families are much more likely than urban poor families to have earned income from some form of employment. Rural poor food stamp households, as well as the rural poor population in general, are more likely to contain elderly members than their urban counterparts.

Thus, rural poverty presents its own unique characteristics that set it apart from poverty in urban and suburban settings. FNS programs are flexible enough to reach and serve this population. For example, the National School Lunch Program is available to 95 percent of rural households with children. Among children in these households across all income categories, nearly 80 percent receive a school lunch on a typical day. For urban children the rate is 62 percent. In the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, fully half of all distribution sites are located in nonmetropolitan areas. In 1986, 55 percent of all recipient households received benefits from these locations, indicating that the sites are appropriately distributed for access by the rural population.

In the WIC Program, due to cost containment initiatives undertaken by State agencies administering WIC, FNS estimates that the WIC Program will be available in almost every county within the continental United States by 1990. As a result, few, if any, rural areas will be left unserved by WIC.

Migrant farm workers are an especially high-risk rural WIC target population, and a number of regulatory provisions have been enacted to improve WIC's access to migrant women and their children. The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations provides a monthly food package in lieu of food coupons to eligible low-income Native Americans living on or near reservations. We currently estimate that about 137,000 households receive benefits through this program.

In the Food Stamp Program, although only about 22 percent of all households in the country were located in rural areas in 1986, 30 percent of food stamp households were rural. In 1986, the same proportion of eligible rural poor households received food stamps as eligible urban poor households, indicating that the program is as accessible in rural areas as in urban areas.

Not only does the Food Stamp Program reach equal proportions of rural and urban poor, the program is also responsive to the unique needs of the rural poor. The program contains provisions that benefit the elderly, who are more likely to live in rural than urban areas. The program regulations recognize that people in rural areas may experience special difficulties by providing optional alternatives to normal procedures. Benefits can be mailed directly to households, eliminating at least one trip every month.

In applying for food stamps, State agencies are required to use telephone interviews instead of office interviews for people with difficulty getting to offices. State agencies permit rural families to

apply for benefits in the county adjacent to the one in which they reside if that office is more accessible. State agencies also assist people in rural areas with toll-free hotlines for information and complaints, and have extended office hours, out-stationed workers, satellite offices, and contracts with organizations to provide information.

The Food Stamp Program has several provisions as well that should assist migrant farm workers. Migrant farm worker households can qualify as destitute if they have few or no resources, thus guaranteeing them food stamps within 5 days. States are required to provide bilingual certification workers and materials in certain situations and to supply assistance with program applications as needed. States may improve access in rural areas through the use of extended office hours, outstationed workers and itinerant or satellite certification offices.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, it is clear that the rural poor have special needs that careful, well-designed food assistance programs can help to address. Recent legislative changes are now being implemented that will help further our mission, making food assistance readily available to all of those who need it. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my formal testimony and we will, of course, be happy to answer any questions you and the committee may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dunn appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Dunn. One of the members in opening remarks mentioned the stigma sometimes felt by food stamp recipients or applicants. Is that a problem in your view, and if so, do you have any specific plans or suggestions as to how that might be alleviated?

Mr. DUNN. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I did not hear the first part.

Mr. HATCHER. Someone mentioned in their opening statement, one of the members here, that in some areas there is a stigma attached to being a recipient or a stigma attached to applying, and that might inhibit participation in the Food Stamp Program. Is that a problem? If so, how much of a problem, and is it something that you think needs addressing?

Mr. DUNN. That issue has been one that has been with the Food Stamp Program since its inception. We encourage anybody who feels that they need food assistance to go in and apply for food stamp benefits. We try very diligently to work with our regional and State offices to reduce any kind of stigma or any kind of negative perception associated with receiving food stamps, and we hope that those measures undertaken are successful.

There may be certain persons who, for whatever reason, may not feel that they would want to apply for stamps or use them, but we certainly encourage those persons who are in need of food assistance to apply.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you. Mr. Emerson, do you have questions?

Mr. EMERSON. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Food Stamp Program provides benefits for needy individuals and families, and the cost of the program for 1989 is estimated to be about $13.6 bil-

lion, which is a significant increase over the 1980 figure of $9.2 billion.

I am wondering if there is any way that the Department estimates how much of the food stamp funds go to rural areas of the United States. Do you have a way to break that down? If you do, does this represent a proportional distribution of the funds as it relates to the number of people in need in rural and urban areas?

Mr. DUNN. As we mentioned in the testimony, Mr. Emerson, we know that while there is about 22 percent of the country's population located in rural areas, about 30 percent of food stamp households are in rural areas. And we know that about one-third of the funds from the Food Stamp Program go to those living in rural areas.

Mr. EMERSON. Do you have a similar breakdown for TEFAP?

Mr. BRALEY. Mr. Emerson, we have some information from a survey that showed that just over half of the sites for TEFAP distribution were located in nonmetropolitan areas. In terms of the amount of food that goes out in rural areas, we do not have that specific data. We do not collect the detailed information on the TEFAP program that we do on food stamps. I would be happy to check and see if we had anything further on that for the record.

[The information follows:]

Question from Mr. Emerson. Do you have a rural/urban breakdown of TEFAP recipients?

Answer. Fully half of all distribution sites for the TEFAP program are located in rural areas. In 1986, 55 percent of all recipient households received benefits from these locations, indicating that the sites are appropriately distributed for easy access by the rural population.

Mr. EMERSON. I would appreciate it if you would. This is a subject that we want to pursue. Are you aware of barriers to participation that are unique to rural areas? In other words, have you focused on that subject? Has the Department ever looked at the question of barriers to participation in rural areas?

Mr. DUNN. When the Hunger Prevention Act legislation was being discussed and crafted last year, we looked at the issue of which people may not have readily available access to the programs and how that could be addressed. There have been longstanding provisions in the regulations for the Food Stamp Program that allow State agencies to use alternative procedures for persons who may find it difficult to get to local offices. That was further reinforced by the Hunger Prevention Act which provides for the mailing of applications for food stamps, home visits to verify the information provided on the application, and mail issuance of benefits to those households who are eligible in order to alleviate the problem of having to physically go to the welfare office to either apply for or receive benefits.

Mr. EMERSON. The next thing I want to raise is an opportunity for you to make a commercial. We are aware that the Food and Nutrition Service is participating with the Ad Council in a campaign to provide nutrition information to food stamp participants. I think it is important that the public is aware of the link between good nutrition and good health, and I want to give you the opportunity to describe this Ad Council campaign, which has our blessing and I hope it has your blessing as well.

Mr. DUNN. Yes sir, it certainly does. We have been pleased to work with the Ad Council in a joint effort to develop informational materials that are called "Choosing Foods for a Healthy Family." We have undertaken this effort with the Ad Council in order to provide information to food stamp and other low-income Americans about the kinds of foods that would be most beneficial for them to purchase with their food stamps and that would be nutritious and economical. Information is also provided on how to best cook and prepare those foods that they have bought with their food stamps.

We have, since March, provided those information brochures to almost every food stamp office in the country and to the States. We are also seeing the public service announcements from the Ad Council appearing on radio and television and in newspaper advertisements and bus cards as well. These ads make food stamp and other low-income households aware that this information is available and we encourage them to go ahead and pick the brochures up at their local offices.

Mr. EMERSON. I see my time has expired. I have a number of additional questions, Mr. Chairman, which I would ask unanimous consent to submit in writing. They are rather technical and it would probably be better if we had the answers in writing in any event.

Mr. HATCHER. Without objection.

Mr. EMERSON. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. DUNN. Thank you.

[The information follows:]

Emerson for Johnsrud

MR. EMERSON. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is a very valuable program and one which just celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Two constituents of mine, Jim and Aretha Robinson of East Prairie, Missouri, were recognized last year for their contributions to that program. It is a program that is especially helpful to rural families. Will you comment on the status of that program?

DR. JOHNSRUD. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) continues to assist low-income families and youth acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets to contribute to their personal development and improvement of total family diets and nutritional welfare. This year marks the 20th anniversary of EFNEP. During this time, it has served about 21 million participants or roughly 1 million families a year have benefitted from the EFNEP program. In addition, about 10 million youth have participated in the EFNEP program.

Studies have shown that their retention of knowledge and practice is very good. Former EFNEP participants showed that even 5 years after graduation, their food recall scores, their nutritional knowledge, and food practices scores remain significantly improved in comparison to their scores recorded upon entry into the program.

The audience profile of the EFNEP participants is as follows:

- 67 percent of participants have an annual income under $3,700
- 90 percent have an annual income under $7,900
- 62 percent of participants are minorities
- 46 percent of participants live in central cities of over 59,000
- 64 percent of participants are also enrolled in the food stamp program

During this anniversary year, many of the accomplishments of EFNEP have been recognized. We are also looking to the future. A task force is preparing a strategic plan and recommendations for the future of the program.

Emerson for FNS

QUESTIONS FOR USDA WITNESSES

1. THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PROVIDES BENEFITS FOR NEEDY INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES. THE COST OF THE PROGRAM FOR 1989 IS ESTIMATED TO BE $13.6 BILLION----A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OVER THE 1980 FIGURE OF $9.2 BILLION. IS THERE ANY WAY THE DEPARTMENT CAN ESTIMATE HOW MUCH OF THE FOOD STAMP FUNDS GO TO RURAL AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES? DOES THIS REPRESENT A PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE FUNDS AS IT RELATES TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS?

Scott Dunn addressed these at the hearing. See transcript for his replies.

2. CAN YOU GIVE US THE SAME TYPE OF BREAKDOWN FOR TEFAP?

3. IS THE USDA AWARE OF BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM THAT ARE UNIQUE TO RURAL AREAS? ARE THERE PROVISIONS IN THE ACT PERTAINING TO TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY THE RURAL POOR?

INSERT p.33 OAE working on a response

4. A RECENT REPORT BY THE GAO ESTIMATED ANNUAL FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION RATES AND FOUND THAT IN BOTH 1979 AND 1986 MORE THAT HALF OF HOUSEHOLDS ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS BASED ON THEIR INCOME ALONE DID NOT PARTICIPATE. IN BOTH 1979 AND 1986 HALF OF THE ELIGIBLE NONPARTICIPANT DID NOT THINK THEY WERE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS. TWO-THIRDS OF THOSE WHO DID THINK THEY WERE ELIGIBLE DID NOT TRY TO GET FOOD STAMPS. THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN THE FINDINGS BETWEEN 1979 AND 1986. CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION FROM MR. EMERSON -
5/17 "HUNGER IN RURAL AMERICA" HEARING

Q. A recent report by the GAO estimated annual food stamp participation rates and found that in both 1979 and 1986 more than half of households eligible for food stamps based on their income alone did not participate. In both 1979 and 1986, half of the eligible nonparticipants did not think they were eligible for food stamps. Two-thirds of those who did think they were eligible did not try to get food stamps. There appears to be little difference in the findings between 1979 and 1986. Can you explain why?

A. We think GAO has understated the extent of participation in the Food Stamp Program. The data base GAO uses to calculate participation rates is flawed by respondent underreporting of benefit receipt and income. Other studies conducted by USDA and the Congressional Budget Office, using data adjusted for benefit underreporting, find that 60 percent of eligible households and 66 percent of eligible individuals participate in the Food Stamp Program. Furthermore, 80 percent of the total benefits that could be paid to eligible households if all participated are in fact paid out, indicating that benefits tend to reach the most needy.

As you note, the proportions of eligibles who thought themselves ineligible and of eligibles who chose not to receive benefits did not change significantly between 1979 and 1986. In some ways this is puzzling given program changes and fluctuations in food costs and other economic conditions in the intervening years. In other respects it may not be so surprising. The last significant change in food stamp participation rates occurred in 1979, when elimination of the requirement that recipients purchase a portion of their coupons with their own money caused a surge in participation levels. This could mean that only major structural change in the program will bring about a significant change in rates of participation. If this is so, it is more understandable that rates have remained steady for the past nine years despite comparatively minor program changes and fluctuations in economic conditions.

Neither the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (the data base used for the GAO report) nor any other available data base of program eligibles or participants provides any clear explanations. We know that the factors affecting a person's decision whether or not to participate in a benefit program are complex. We continue to explore the dynamics of program participation in the hope of more fully understanding participation patterns.

It is significant to note that although participation did not increase from 1979 to 1986, it did not decrease either. In 1979, states could receive federal matching funds for outreach and public information activities, but this matching provision was eliminated in 1981 and not reinstituted until 1988. Elimination of matching funds apparently did not increase the percentage of eligibles who thought themselves ineligible in 1986, as some had thought would happen.

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. Panetta.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me ask with regard to accessibility to food stamps. One, I think, would assume that in rural areas it is much more difficult to be able to access food stamps because of the distances, transportation, as well as the work hours of the people involved in that part of the country. In what ways can we improve the accessibility of people living in rural America to food stamps and other benefits?

Mr. DUNN. Provisions that have been in the food stamp regulations for some time allow increased access for rural persons who would like to get food stamp benefits. They can in many instances use the telephone hotlines—that are going to be set up as a result of the Hunger Prevention Act requirements—to inquire about the availability of food stamps. Oftentimes the States have the flexibility in order to mail the application forms to the applicants, who can fill them out at home and send them back in. Also, the offices are afforded the flexibility to go to the applicant's home to verify the information on the application and then mail the food stamp benefits to the recipient so that they would not have to come to the office to pick them up.

There are many innovative approaches that some States are undertaking such as having mobile certification vehicles go around to the different areas within rural counties to lessen the distance traveled by applicants to apply.

Mr. PANETTA. One of the suggestions that has been recommended is to allow people to be able to go to the Social Security office and get a number that would allow them to kind of do "one-stop shopping" there as opposed to having to try to get benefits at various different offices. Is there any effort to try to improve that kind of administration of the programs?

Mr. DUNN. Yes, sir. Prior to the passage of the Hunger Prevention Act, there was a provision inserted in the statute that allows persons to go to Social Security offices and pick up an application for food stamps, fill it out and submit it.

Mr. PANETTA. Do you know if people are making use of that at the present time?

Mr. DUNN. Yes, sir.

Mr. PANETTA. It is. Ms. O'Neil, are you involved with that?

Ms. O'NEIL. Yes. We have a cooperative agreement with the Social Security Administration, and we do, in fact, reimburse them for the cost. So we do know that it is being used.

Mr. PANETTA. And, I mean, it is happening now, at the present time? I mean, there are people that are using the Social Security office for that purpose?

Ms. O'NEIL. Yes, there are. I cannot tell you to what extent.

Mr. PANETTA. On the statistics that you provided in your testimony, 22 percent of all households in the country were located in rural areas in 1986. Thirty percent of the food stamp households are rural. Is that a 1986 statistic? Do you have anything more recent on that?

Mr. DUNN. No, sir; 1986 is the latest characteristic data that we have.

Mr. PANETTA. Do you have any sense of whether this is about the same at the present time, or is it larger or less? Do you have any idea?

Mr. DUNN. We would estimate that it would be approximately the same now as in 1986.

Mr. PANETTA. So, at least it is apparent from the statistics that you have here that there are higher poverty rates in rural areas, at least in terms of the need for food stamps? Is that a fair conclusion?

Mr. DUNN. We find that about the same proportion of urban and rural persons do participate in the Food Stamp Program which would indicate, we believe, that the program is available and accessible to those in rural areas who do need the food assistance.

Mr. PANETTA. With regard to housing costs in rural America, I do not know whether you have analyzed those that qualify for food stamps, but are the housing costs likely to be more in rural America than urban America, or what are you seeing in terms of housing costs generally?

Mr. DUNN. I am sorry. We do not have anything right at the moment. We would be happy to take a look at that and provide that for you.

Mr. PANETTA. Would you please look at that issue?

Mr. DUNN. Yes.

Mr. PANETTA. Because I think that one of the concerns is that the cost of housing is eating up what otherwise could be going to provide food for the family.

Mr. DUNN. Yes, sir, I would be happy to do so.

[The information follows:]

Question from Mr. Panetta. With regards to housing costs in rural America, I do not know if you have analyzed those that qualify for food stamps, but are the housing costs likely to be more in rural America than in urban America, or what are you seeing in terms of housing costs generally?

Answer. Among the food stamp population in 1986, rural program participants had lower average housing costs than urban participants. In rural areas, monthly shelter expenses averaged $218 a month, compared to $267 in urban areas. Thus, rural costs ran about 18 percent less than urban costs. It is reasonable to assume that the difference between rural and urban shelter costs today is similar to the 1986 figure.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. Espy.

Mr. ESPY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the FNS representatives for appearing today, and I also want to thank them for working with me, particularly Mr. Braley, for including catfish in the School Lunch Program. That is something that we are interested in and I think that we need to proceed on that question.

I would like to ask you, though, about the TEFAP program. I have been talking with the administrator of the department of public welfare in Mississippi, and he is concerned that the TEFAP program is not flexible enough. In other words, we need to see if we could absorb more of the locally grown commodities into the TEFAP program, and it really makes a lot of sense to me. We would have less problems with distribution expense, spoilage, and we could do a lot more for the local producers. So have you considered this question? Why can't we open up and make more flexible the TEFAP program's reception to locally grown commodities?

Mr. BRALEY. Mr. Espy, we have had a chance to explore that proposal with you and your staff as well as independently; the gentleman from Mississippi brought it to us for some consideration. We do have some concerns about that. It is currently not authorized in legislation, and we feel that the Department, buying on a national basis, is able to get the best buy on a wide range of foods to make available for people in the TEFAP program throughout the country. One of the other concerns that comes to mind is that I believe the proposal envisioned purchasing fresh produce within the State of Mississippi.

One of the things that we have been concerned about is the shelf life of products that we make available and that we have them on a continuing basis year-round. We would have a concern, I think, that fresh produce is not available year-round in many States, probably including Mississippi. So we have some concerns about whether or not that would adequately meet the nutritional needs of people as well as the types of purchases we are making in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Hunger Prevention Act.

Mr. ESPY. So you are saying that the benefit and USDA's ability to purchase nationally is offset then by the benefits you receive from the excess to transportation? In other words, buying locally would save you money on distribution? The policy is saying you save more by national purchase?

Mr. BRALEY. The logistical problems associated with setting up even a State distribution system for fresh produce to get it out in a timely way and prevent spoilage is of concern to us. And the Hunger Prevention Act, in setting forth the types of food we should buy, mentioned that we should focus on items that have a long shelf life so that they would be available for people and survive as they go through the distribution network and not have a quality deterioration. We have some concerns about the logistical problems of the State purchase program especially for fresh produce as has been indicated.

Mr. ESPY. Well, could I just ask then that you work with us a little bit more on fresh vegetables, preserving fresh vegetables more than we are able to do. I think if we move more to a regional distribution basis that we will save money and then we could bring some benefit to the producer and to the consumer as well.

Mr. BRALEY. We would be happy to explore any options you would like us to, sir.

Mr. ESPY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HATCHER. Yes, sir. Mr. Sarpalius.

Mr. SARPALIUS. Mr. Dunn, I am a new member, and I am still trying to learn many of these programs, but I am curious on the amount of food stamp people that qualify in the rural areas. Do you have any idea how that breaks down age-wise? I am interested in how many of them qualify as senior citizens mainly.

Mr. DUNN. We do have demographic data that breaks it down by age category among the entire population. I am not sure that we have the actual breakdown—urban versus rural—within those subcategories.

Mr. SARPALIUS. Do you have any feel as to—in the rural areas—what percentage of the senior citizens benefit from the Food Stamp Program?

Mr. DUNN. We can certainly check that and I would be happy to provide that for you. We do know that there is a higher percentage of elderly participants in the Food Stamp Program in rural areas than there is in urban areas.

[The information follows:]

Question from Mr. Sarpalius. Do you have any feel as to in the rural areas what percentage of the senior citizens benefit from the Food Stamp Program?

Answer. Rural elderly are more likely to participate in the Food Stamp Program than the urban elderly. Approximately 50 percent of eligible rural elderly individuals receive food stamps, compared to about 43 percent of eligible urban elderly individuals.

We also know that the elderly comprise a larger portion of the rural food stamp population than of the urban food stamp population: about 27 percent of rural program participants are elderly, while about 18 percent of urban recipients are.

Mr. SARPALIUS. The migrant farm workers, how do they qualify for food stamps?

Mr. DUNN. They would have the same eligibility determinations as the rest of the population. There are certain provisions that are afforded them that are not available to the rest of the population. For example, if they are considered destitute they would be eligible for expedited service which means that they would be able to receive the food stamps within 5 days of applying for them.

If they are in the job stream, and going from one location to another, there are provisions that apply to them that would allow them to be considered for the Food Stamp Program that the rest of the population would not.

Mr. SARPALIUS. Do they have to prove their citizenship?

Mr. DUNN. The Food Stamp Program is the one program that FNS administers that limits participation to U.S. citizens and legal resident aliens. We do have, on the application form, a place where people have to indicate whether they are a U.S. citizen or a legal resident alien.

Mr. SARPALIUS. And what do you require to prove that?

Mr. DUNN. If there is any reason that that would be called into question, then the eligibility worker would have the opportunity to ask the individual to provide any documentation and indicate their legal resident status.

Mr. SARPALIUS. Would that usually be a birth certificate or something like that?

Mr. DUNN. Yes, or a card from the INS that would indicate their status.

Mr. SARPALIUS. Thank you.

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. Dunn, Ms. O'Neil, Mr. Braley, I would like to thank you for being here today. I appreciate your testimony.

Mr. DUNN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HATCHER. Our next witness is Dr. James Heimbach, Acting Administrator, Human Nutrition Information Service, with USDA here in Washington. I would like to welcome you, Dr. Heimbach, and ask you to introduce the gentleman with you.

STATEMENT OF JAMES T. HEIMBACH, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, HUMAN NUTRITION INFORMATION SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY ROBERT L. RIZEK, DIRECTOR, NUTRITION MONITORING DIVISION

Mr. HEIMBACH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am accompanied here today by Dr. Robert Rizek, who is the Director of HNIS' Nutrition Monitoring Division, and could provide any answers to any technical questions people may have about our survey data.

Mr. Chairman, I am James Heimbach, the Acting Administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service at the Department of Agriculture. I am very pleased to be here today to participate in this hearing on hunger in rural America. My testimony today will cover two areas. First, I will discuss what the results of our surveys conducted in 1985 and 1986 indicate about the dietary status of the rural poor. Second, I will discuss what types of additional information will be available from future HNIS surveys that will address the issue of hunger in rural America.

In 1985 we initiated the continuing survey of food intakes by individuals and repeated it in 1986. In both years, the survey included women 19 to 50 years of age, and their children 1 to 5 years of age. The survey included two samples, a sample of all-income households and a sample of low-income households.

Low-income households are those having incomes before taxes for the previous year at or below 130 percent of the poverty guidelines. The survey data permit two types of comparisons of particular interest to this committee. First, the food and nutrient intakes by low-income rural women and children compared with those of low-income metro women and children. And second, the food and nutrient intakes by low-income women and children who live in households that participated in the Food Stamp Program, compared with the intakes of nonparticipants.

Only a summary of survey results is provided here. The tables and the attachments provide more detailed data. First, looking at rural versus metro. Low-income rural women had food intakes that were generally similar to their metropolitan counterparts. Rural women had slightly higher intakes of vegetables, coffee, and tea and slightly lower intakes of fruits, alcoholic beverages, and carbonated soft drinks than did metro women.

These fairly minor differences in food intakes by rural versus metro women do not translate into any differences in food energy intake or intakes of those nutrients which are below the RDA. The mean nutrient intakes by women in both urbanization groups were above the RDA for 8 of 15 nutrients examined but below the RDA for food energy and 7 nutrients, vitamin B-6, calcium, magnesium, iron, vitamin E, folacin, and zinc.

For the seven nutrients below the RDA, the mean levels of the two groups, metro and rural, were almost identical. I would like to call to your attention that higher income women also had nutrient intakes below the RDA for these same nutrients.

Rural children had mean intakes that were similar to or higher than those of metro children for total meat, poultry, and fish, fluid milk, eggs, vegetables, fruit drinks, and soft drinks. And they had

lower mean intakes of grain products. Lower income rural children had intakes of food energy, protein, and fat and all vitamins and minerals that were similar to or higher than intakes by lower income metro children.

Average nutrient intakes by children in both urbanization groups were above the RDA for 13 of 15 nutrients examined, but they were below the RDA for both iron and zinc. Again, this is true of higher income children also. Looking at food stamp participation, in general low-income rural women had food intakes that were similar regardless of their participation or nonparticipation in the Food Stamp Program. That in the tables by the way is designated FSP or NFSP.

There were several exceptions. Participating women had considerably higher intake of fluid milk than nonparticipating women. They also had higher intakes of mixtures that were mostly grain, of coffee, fruit drinks, ades, and soft drinks and slightly lower intakes of fruits and tea.

A comparison of rural women participating in the Food Stamp Program with metropolitan women who are also participating shows few differences in food and nutrition intakes. The rural women had higher intakes of milk, particularly skim milk, and slightly lower intakes of fruits than did metropolitan women. Again, both groups of women were below the RDA for the same nutrients, although rural women had somewhat higher levels of calcium.

Taking a look at the diets of children in rural areas, we find that children living in households that participated in the Food Stamp Program had higher intakes of total meat, poultry, and fish, of fluid milk and vegetables and lower intakes of fruits, fruit drinks, ades, and soft drinks than did nonparticipating children. Comparing participating children in rural areas with participating children in metro areas indicates the rural children had more milk and vegetables and less grain products. The rural children had higher levels of iron and zinc.

We conclude that the dietary status of low-income rural women and their children is as good as that of the urban poor and even someone better in the case of calcium for women and iron for children. The slightly lower intake of fruits by the rural poor is balanced by a slightly higher intake of vegetables. Looking at data that we will be able to make available for the future, we would like to point out that the continuing survey of food intakes by individuals initiated in 1985 is the first nationwide dietary intake survey designed to be conducted year by year in this country.

Because it was a new survey and because we were initiating a larger nationwide food consumption survey, we put off data collection for the third year until 1989. This survey began last month. It will now be conducted each year from 1989 through at least 1996 and each year again will include both all-income and low-income samples.

It will also include data for all sex age groups in the population. The survey results will be reported using a moving average. The first data from the 1989 CSFII will be available following the 1990 data collection. After that, we will be able for the first time to provide annual updates of our dietary status measures. A cooperative

effort among the Food and Drug Administration, the Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA and us was established to plan a survey on consumer knowledge and attitudes on diet health issues as a telephone follow-up to the main food intake survey.

This project represents the first time that a nationwide sample will be used to study the relationship between individuals' actual dietary intakes and their knowledge and attitudes about dietary behavior. By the end of this calendar year, we expect to have data available for the 1987–88 nationwide food consumption survey. This survey is larger than the continuing survey and includes in addition to information on the food and nutrient intakes of individuals a household food use component.

This component includes the collection of information on the kinds and quantities of foods households use during a 7-day period and the cost of those foods. This component provides cost information that makes possible a number of analyses pertaining to the rural poor. For example, food shopping practices, the quantity and money value of purchased foods, home produced foods, and those that were obtained as gifts or in payment for work, the allegation of the food dollar to various food groups, the nutrients received per dollar spent, and the price per pound paid for different food items.

This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I or Dr. Rizek will be happy to answer any questions that you or members of the subcommittee may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Heimbach appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Doctor. I would like to ask what percentage of the income of the average poor rural household is spent on food, if you know?

Mr. HEIMBACH. I do not believe we have that information available, not on recent data. The last survey that collected food purchase price information was the 1977–78 survey. The 1985–86 surveys did not collect food price data. When the data from the 1987–88 survey are by the end of this year, we will have that information, and we will be happy to provide it to you at that time.

Mr. HATCHER. Appreciate that. What percentage of the rural poor participate in Federal nutrition programs? Do you have that statistic?

Mr. HEIMBACH. Again, if we define rural poor by the only criterion we obtain in our surveys, and that is income level, and defining rural poor as those with incomes at or below 130 percent of poverty guidelines, the answer is approximately 50 percent. That by the way is, that figure is, approximately the same for both rural and urban areas.

Mr. HATCHER. You mentioned gathering some data on food costs. How does that differ between rural and urban areas, the cost of food?

Mr. HEIMBACH. Again, the only data we have are more than 10 years old and given some major changes that have occurred in the food distribution system, I am not sure that they would represent the case today. We could get you the information from the 1977–78 survey if you are interested in it. Again, the information will be available when the 1987–88 survey data become available at the end of this year.

Mr. HATCHER. Do you not think that is relevant that we should have that information in determining what the program should be?

Mr. HEIMBACH. I think it is very relevant information, sir. That is why we collected it. It is particularly expensive information to collect. It requires a fair amount of questioning to accurately determine household's income status. Consequently we do not collect it in the continuing survey, but we do obtain that information in the decennial survey.

Mr. HATCHER. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate both of you being here. Thank you. Appreciate your testimony. Our next witness this morning is Mr. Myron Johnsrud, Administrator, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington. We would like to thank you for being here and would ask you to introduce those who accompany you.

STATEMENT OF MYRON D. JOHNSRUD, ADMINISTRATOR, EXTENSION SERVICE, U.S., DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY BONNIE BRAUN, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, HOME ECONOMICS AND HUMAN NUTRITION, AND WELLS WILLIS, NATIONAL PROGRAM LEADER IN THE AREA OF FOOD SCIENCE

Mr. JOHNSRUD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Dr. Bonnie Braun, who is our Deputy Administrator for Home Economics and Human Nutrition, and Wells Willis, who is our National Program Leader in the area of Food Science, and we appreciate the opportunity to appear before your committee and talk about hunger in rural America. Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I am going to highlight my prepared text and submit the complete text for the record and highlight my comments this morning.

Perhaps it would be appropriate just to set the stage to indicate that the Cooperative Extension System is a national network that links research, science, and technology to the needs of people where they live, and really our focus then is practical education to help people solve critical issues that affect their lives and affect the Nation in total.

Also, it is perhaps important to remind ourselves that the extension system is a tripartite arrangement with Federal, State, and local government, and we have a small staff located here in USDA in Washington, DC. But most of our staff is located at the land-grant universities across this Nation and then an even larger number located in most of the counties throughout the Nation.

In addition, we often overlook that we have a large number of paraprofessionals that work, many of them in the areas of human nutrition, and nearly 3 million volunteers that help. And besides that, we do work very closely with many other public and private agencies and some of those have testified just ahead of us here as it relates to this issue of hunger in America.

So our mission then, really, is to focus these resources that I just mentioned on critical issues and targeted curriculum to deal with specific needs of the people. And we have been concerned about the nutritional status of the poor for a number of years. The 1980 Census data show the metropolitan poverty rate to be about 13.5 percent while the nonmetropolitan is about 17 percent. We also

recognize that there are some differences between rural and urban poor.

And again, the data show that rural poor are more likely than urban to live in families headed by two parents, to be employed, elderly, and white. We must also consider that the greater isolation and distances of rural families make them a bit more difficult to reach and work with. As commented earlier, in our nutrition education programs for low-income audiences, we work very closely with other public and private sector organizations.

And across this country, the State extension services have formed partnerships with organizations like WIC, the Women, Infants, and Children's Program, Food Stamp Program, Shelter Program, soup kitchens, tribal health services on Indian reservations, and antihunger coalitions. We also rely heavily on paraprofessional and volunteers in this program delivery and working with these various organizations.

Rural poor pregnant women, often still in their teens, are an important at risk audience we are currently targeting. They are at higher risk for malnutrition, low birth rate and infant mortality. We also know that these young women, whether single or in two parent families have complex needs that go beyond human nutrition. So as a part of our human nutrition effort, we also try to build a more holistic approach to their needs. And obviously, as you try and reach and work with these families of one or two parents, you need to deal with other issues they are facing, and so that is what we attempt to do in getting the job done.

Obviously, the medical profession has much to offer to this problem, and they too have limits on their technology and science at this current time to deal with the severe issue of infant mortality. 1985 figures show that more than 40,000 infants died before they reached the age of 1 year. And so improved prenatal care including better diets is one of the major avenues we believe that is open to prevention, and intervention in this difficult area of child mortality.

And we could not talk about this area of hunger without mentioning we also have concerns and are working with the elderly, and that has been commented on here earlier. Let me give some examples that within our existing capacity of some things we are doing just to illustrate the kinds of programs, and I will highlight some here for your consideration.

We currently have a national initiative, and we have been working on nutrition for some time, but we are trying to focus our resources more sharply on the critical issues of nutrition, diet, and health. And these programs are being designed to bring about changes in dietary habits and lifestyles specifically targeted toward improving low birth weights and lowering infant mortality. We are seeking out at risk low-income audiences including pregnant women, children, and elderly. So that is part of our focus in human nutrition that we are trying to focus more sharply.

For example, one innovative program in West Virginia is training volunteers to work with low-income rural pregnant women. These volunteers teach nutrition and take pregnant women to places they can get some care. They link their work with that of WIC and the Food Stamp Program. These volunteers are also

trained, and we make arrangements so they work in a system. They do not work in isolation. They are part of a network in working with these young women.

A second example would be the collaboration and training of trainers and use of volunteers in a program we call "Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies." That program has been designed just recently. The University of Missouri took the leadership in designing the program, and it is just now being initiated in about 8 states and 24 others are considering implementing the program. But for example, in Arizona, a program is being targeted on the Indian reservations. Kansas is using this program with rural and urban low-income families.

Third would be our 1890 land-grant universities that are focusing nutrition education programs in rural areas of the South. Example, at North Carolina A&T University, they are using trained paraprofessionals to teach pregnant adolescents to improve their diets and develop parenting and life skills necessary to give infants and children a better start in life; again the holistic approach to this matter.

State of Texas, Texas Extension Service, is developing a comprehensive nutrition education initiative to address vulnerable groups and it deals with nutrition and other related matters as I mentioned earlier. So through these nutrition efforts, we hope that dollars provided for food assistance can ultimately go to support better nutrition and health and develop the whole family environment as a part of the educational effort we are involved in.

Let me turn specifically to a plan that we are developing nationally to bring into focus now some of these examples that I have talked about, and that is a draft plan to encourage a nationwide Nutrition Education Program targeted to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, again, consistent with my earlier comments. And this program is being designed to be implemented with the elderly, pregnant teens, health care providers, day care providers, low-income parents of young children, and latchkey children.

We visualize now the program could be linked with other organizations at the national level, State and local levels. For example, we have considered and talked with the Agricultural Research Service and the Human Nutrition Research Center that they have at Baylor that could provide a targeted point of operation for working with outreach and a program focused on children.

And so we have had some discussion in that vein. Similarly, Agricultural Research Service has a nutrition center at Tufts University that focuses some of its research on nutrition as it relates to the elderly. And so these are a couple of examples that we have got in the early plan on how to strengthen our whole nutrition education effort.

It would be appropriate that I also mention briefly one of our major nutrition programs that relates to working with low income, and that is the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. And about half of our effort in this area is directed toward rural areas. And that program has about 65 percent of its enrollees that receive food stamps and about 44 percent are participants in the WIC Program. Again, this program is in cooperation with other agencies.

While that program at first started out as a 1 to 1, we now have gone to small groups, three, four, five, six people at early entry. I have seen, observed, and watched programs where up to 12 to 15 family parents in groups are being educated in the area of human nutrition. That is about a 12-month program before they graduate and bring in a new set of families.

There are some interesting things happening in the State of Florida, for example. A Florida Extension Service has revamped their approach and really targeted and tried to reach more people more intently with their existing resources and just in the last year of 1987–88 that program targeted 30,000 individuals in the State of Florida. So they were able to even reach further with their existing resources.

They are doing so in concert with WIC, food stamp, and various food commodity programs. I want to just very quickly add that youth are also a critical part as I have referred to earlier, and we have examples of in the State of West Virginia, special camps that deal with nutrition for youth, but they also deal with the parents of these children in these camps. So there are some new ideas that are working quite well reaching to the total family.

Well, I could go on with these examples, Mr. Chairman, but let me reach a conclusion here. We have nutrition programs obviously outside of the targeted audience we are talking about here today, so I do not want to leave the impression that our nutrition programs are targeted only to those of low income. For example, there are other concerns besides those I have talked about. We are also providing nutrition education programs that relate to food safety, coronary heart disease, obesity, hypertension, and so on. That is another element of our nutrition education programs.

As the Administrator of the Extension Service, I receive a lot of good proposals every month in the area of human nutrition, good ideas that people would like to have funded to enhance the effort as we deal with this issue that you are addressing here, Mr. Chairman. And to me this is an indication of two things.

One is that we have people out there with a deep commitment who recognize the seriousness of the problem and are really trying to approach it in a manner that deals with the total family and their nutrition, diet, and health needs. And as we use our knowledge base and our experience to implement these promising models, I think we are doing so more efficiently than we were a few years back. To expand our efforts in any great manner will require careful examination of where existing public resources designed to address hunger in America are targeted and deciding upon the importance of education as an intervention and prevention in this whole area of rural health and rural poverty.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. We will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Johnsrud appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Well, thank you for your testimony. That was interesting to me. I had not heard of the camps in West Virginia for youth. Tell me a little bit how do you reach the parents? I assume you have summer camps for the youth, but how do you reach the

parents of the youth? Do they come to the camps, too? Is it like day camps? How does that work?

Mr. JOHNSRUD. I am going to ask my colleagues with me that are more close to that program, but I know it is a summer camp arrangement and the parents get involved with the youth in this process. And either Wells Willis or Bonnie may wish to comment.

Mr. BRAUN. I know a little more about some in Virginia than I do West Virginia so I could not go on the record to say I know exactly what is happening in West Virginia, but the approach is to be a holistic approach so that the parents at the same time that the young people are learning about it also are getting that same sort of education.

And in some cases, they come for the evening programs. In other cases, they come for weekend camping, and the children have been there all week, and then the parents join them for that. In some cases, there is a combination where they go back home and the county agents work with them back home after the children have been in camp. So it kind of varies from place to place as to how that is approached, but it is not unique just to West Virginia, the idea of nutrition camps.

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. de la Garza.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I apologize to the witnesses for my having to be in and out. It is the nature of the job. I read your statement and I am happy with what you are doing and what you intend to do. One thing that I would like to mention is that there are problems, constraints budgetwise. But that does not mean that we cannot upgrade, that we cannot do better, that we should continue trying to do what we can to better serve within the funds that we have.

Second, if there are additional funds needed, well, then we will try and see what we can do. But it does not mean that that is all we are going to do because you can always upgrade and you can always better the system, the delivery, and the training. All of that can still be done.

I understand that you have developed a draft plan to encourage nationwide nutrition. Also, you mentioned something that is very dear to my heart which is the Children's Nutrition Research Center. You call it Baylor here in your statement, but I was at the ground-breaking. No, I could not make the ground-breaking, but I did go when they finally dedicated the building. It is a beautiful, functional building, adequate for the need in the area. My question is: If we are going to work with the elderly, pregnant teens, health care providers, day care providers, low-income parents, et cetera, do you weave in the programs like WIC and expanded nutrition into your plan?

Mr. JOHNSRUD. Yes, Mr. de la Garza. The plan that we have in our mind and are starting to put down on paper does weave in all of the appropriate public and private agencies, and what we had in mind here was to work very closely with Agricultural Research Service, Human Nutrition Research Centers at the two universities I mentioned, and to have a sort of center of excellence, if I can use that term, and I do not want to overplay that. But at the point where you really can be able to focus where the best knowledge is to deal with the critical issues. In this case, nutrition for children

and the elderly. But there is no way that I want to leave the impression that the Extension System does this alone. You do it in partnership with many, many other organizations.

And in regard to the earlier comment about doing things within existing resources, that is why I cited some of those examples like Florida, and so on and so forth, where we have attempted to, with existing resources, to reach much more broadly and not lose the intensity that is so critical in terms of people really benefiting from the experience of information and education.

The CHAIRMAN. That is very important because sometimes even the need changes. At Tufts and Baylor, the nutrition research centers, I keep telling them they should put international in front, International Children Nutrition Research Center. Maybe they will do it one of these days because it can be the key to the world.

And another thing, and this is probably a commendation, but many times it is the type of people who are involved in the programs that give it the quality or give it the recognition. In my area, in my own county of Hidalgo County, we have tremendous extension services, but the expanded nutrition is even better. They have a young lady in charge named Elida Munoz, and she does a fantastic job. She is just the type for the job. She goes out and recruits the volunteers. In a four-square block area she will get the volunteers, and then they have the training and work with the children and with the elderly.

Then periodically they will have a graduation where I come, if I can. Usually, they try and accommodate my schedule. We give them a certificate and it's probably one of the most heartwarming moments imaginable and really brings tears to you to listen to some of the women relate their experience before and after and show the healthy child. Just recently I was at their annual meeting in Weslaco. This lady, well, let me say kindly, I guess, she was a fairly good-looking lady. She said that she had a lot more weight before she got to be that way. And when she graduated, I was there to give her the certificate, and she related her experience that now her children were better taken care of nutritionwise, and they learn. And she was embarrassed for her children that they could not buy beef or meat. But now that she has learned she could use lentils and she knew all of the differences.

With everything she said, even I got so interested that I felt that with the proper nutrition, I could start losing weight. She said the proof that it worked was that her husband could have cared less how she looked. And then one evening we were sitting down for dinner, and he said you sure look good. She said that was worth it all to her. This was done with volunteers. Elida Munoz and one paid worker. The rest were all volunteers throughout the county who get together in the neighborhoods and they work with them and with the children.

The other story is a young man who was brought in to say how it had helped him to be involved in the program. He was maybe like about 12 years old. And he started out his talk by saying Honorable Congressman de la Garza, Madam Chairman, Madam head of the nutrition program, and ladies and gentlemen, friends and my fellow recipients of the program, and he was only 12 years old! So we followed his career. Eventually, he went to college. He worked

for me a couple of summers and went to law school, finished law school, and is a very successful attorney.

But his first public experience, public speaking experience, came from one of these programs where he was brought in, and he practiced and practiced. The other day I told him, John David, I need you, come back to work with me. He said you cannot afford me, Congressman. [Laughter.]

He was one of the recipients of that Expanded Nutrition Program in my home county. So there is all the good things, but we cannot let one child fall through the crack and we cannot let one elderly person suffer. We have to see that the poor get something out of the system. But that entails a lot of other things. I remember our good friend Lyndon Johnson. He came down to a function they had for me, and they asked him about what did he try to do as President. He said, well, not any big deal. I tried to keep the world at peace. His philosophy of Government was that to the extent that Government can involve itself that you have a job for every person able to work, a decent home for his family, and the classroom for his child. He said beyond that everything will take care of itself.

This is where we fill in; between the job if it is not adequate, between the home if it is not adequate, and between the classroom if it is not adequate. Those are the programs we deal with here, and we appreciate your work and cooperation, and I appreciate the time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you. I would like to tell you a personal experience. I grew up in a county of about 4,000 people in rural south Georgia. My first public speaking was as a project in 4H and my first trip more than 25 miles from home was to 4H camps. So the Extension Service touched me at a very early age back in the 1950's. So thank you for being here today. Thank you for what you do and for your testimony.

Mr. JOHNSRUD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HATCHER. Our next witnesses are a panel of four. I will ask them to come up. Ms. Teesa Barr, food stamp supervisor, in Albany, Dougherty County, GA; Ms. Charlie Mae Dean, Food Stamp Program recipient from Fort Valley, GA; Mr. Elza Wilson, president, board of directors, Mountaineer Food Bank, Gassaway, WV; Mr. Chris Rebstock, eastern region manager of Second Harvest, Baltimore, MD, and I see our numbers have grown by at least one, Ms.——

Ms. KNICELEY. Kniceley.

Mr. HATCHER. And you are with Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. This is Carla Kniceley, the director of the Mountaineer Food Bank at Gassaway, WV.

Mr. HATCHER. Very good. Thank you. I appreciate all of you folks being here today and would like to call on you for testimony in the order in which I called your names. And the first is the food stamp supervisor from Albany, GA, which happens to be in the heart of the district I represent. I would like to welcome you, Ms. Barr. I appreciate your being here.

STATEMENT OF THERESA F. BARR, CORRECTIVE ACTION COORDINATOR, DOUGHERTY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES, ALBANY, GA, ACCOMPANIED BY JUNE MERRITT, DIRECTOR, FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES

Ms. BARR. Hello, my name is Teesa Barr, and I am the corrective action coordinator for the Dougherty County Department of Family and Children Services in Albany, GA. I have worked with the department for 13 years in the area of food stamps and AFDC serving as a caseworker and as a supervisor. In my present position, I assist the county with developing strategies to improve the way we provide benefits to our clients. I feel the Food Stamp Program is necessary in order to safeguard the health and the well-being of our citizens.

However, the rules governing the program have become so complex over the last 10 years that they are difficult to implement and cause much frustration for our clients. The size of the caseload a caseworker has to work with also impacts on how efficiently they are able to get benefits out to clients. In our particular office, the average food stamp caseload is made up of 294 households which is a very high number. The high caseloads and complexity of the regulations are impacting very negatively. Seventy-five percent of our food stamp caseworkers have less than 2 years experience. I have met with the workers throughout the State and have discussed the problems we and our clients have. A copy of these recommendations made by the food stamp caseworkers in Georgia is included with a copy of my testimony.

Next, I would like to go over several case examples using fictitious names to show you how these regulations impact on our clients. The first example is for medical expenses. Mrs. Mary Smith, age 72, who receives social security, comes into our office for her food stamp review. With her, she brings a big envelope full of medical bills which she has incurred. She and an elderly sister are the only ones living in her household. She has outstanding medical bills of $250 and has just paid her prescription drug bill of $100. She has no record of how much medicare or insurance has paid on these bills as she is unable to keep good records and has no one to help her.

Based on our current regulations, we would not be able to give Mrs. Smith the deduction for the medical bills as she is unable to provide us with the information to show how much medicare and insurance has paid on these bills. To add insult to injury, she could not be allowed any deduction for the $100 she paid for her prescription drugs as the food stamp regulations state that no deduction can be given for a bill that has already been paid.

As a result of our current food stamp regulations, Mrs. Smith will not be allowed the very much needed medical deductions which in turn will mean that she will receive far less food coupons than she is entitled to receive. I feel that if a client can verify at least one out of pocket medical expense, that they should be allowed a standard deduction that would cover all medical bills similar to the standard utility allowance.

The second example I would like to share with you is about actual utility verification. The Jones family applying for food

stamps pay no heating or cooling costs so they are not entitled to the standard utility allowance of $153. However, they do receive a bill for electricity. In order for this family to be allowed a deduction for the electric bill, they must provide verification of past expenses.

In order for them to get the expenses verified, they would have to go to the utility company and verify the past month electric bills for the 12 months prior to the month of application plus any price increases from the utility company. This family lives out in the county. In order to do this, they would have to pay $5 to $10 to get someone to take them to the electric company to get the verification. They are not able to verify the actual utility cost so as a result are not allowed the deduction which will mean that they receive less food stamps than they were entitled to receive.

I feel that we must come up with a procedure that is easier to implement such as a standard deduction for all households that incur utility cost regardless of heating or cooling costs. The third example I would like to share with you is about student status for students living with their parent or parents. Ms. Brown is a 19-year-old college student who lives in the home with her mother and two sisters who receive AFDC. Ms. Brown is ineligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program as she does not meet the student work requirement of being employed 20 hours per week and is not on work study. As a result of these regulations, the household would receive only $236 per month in food stamp coupons. However, if Ms. Brown had been eligible to be included in the food stamp household the coupons received would have been $300 which would have gone a long way in helping them meet their monthly food budget.

I feel the work requirement for students living with a parent or parents should be removed. I feel we should promote college attendance which in turn will promote self-sufficiency.

The last example I would like to share with you is on separate household status for someone who is 60 years of age and disabled. Mrs. Jane Doe brings her elderly disabled mother to our office to apply for food stamps. Mrs. Doe's mother lives with her. However, she is on a special diet due to her poor health. Mrs. Doe states in the interview that her mother is unable to purchase and prepare her meals due to health conditions.

Mrs. Doe is able to provide her mother a place to live, but cannot afford to buy her the food she needs for her special diet. Mrs. Doe is married and has two school age children. Both she and her husband work, but they just can support their own family. Based on our current food stamp regulations, the only way that Mrs. Doe's mother could be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program is to include the total household income. And that is excluding Mrs. Doe's mother. The total household income cannot exceed 165 percent of the poverty level for the household size and that amount, the total household income could not exceed $1,602. In this particular case, the household's income level exceeded this amount so Mrs. Doe's mother is not eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program.

We would like to request that separate household status be granted for someone who is over 60 and disabled. We feel that they

should be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program regardless of whether or not they are able to purchase and prepare their meals. We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations so the Food Stamp Program will better meet the needs of clients we currently serve and make it more accessible to those we should be reaching. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barr appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you very much, Ms. Barr. We will reserve questions until we have heard from each of the four. Mrs. Charlie Mae Dean from Fort Valley, GA, a Food Stamp Program recipient.

STATEMENT OF CHARLIE MAE DEAN, FOOD STAMP PROGRAM RECIPIENT, FORT VALLEY, GA

Mrs. DEAN. My name is Charlie Mae Dean. I live at 109 Troutman Avenue, apartment 1, Fort Valley, GA, 31030. I was asked to come and speak about the Food Stamp Program and what it has done to help the poor in Fort Valley.

I can testify that the Food Stamp Program has helped my family. My husband Clement, my two sons, Antonio 14 and John 8. Food stamps let me buy good nutritious meals for my family. It helps a lot. It helps me prepare three basic meals for my family. I can buy milk, meat, and vegetables with food stamps that will give my family a good nutritious diet. The Food Stamp Program has helped a lot of low-income people in Fort Valley that could not make it without food stamps. But like everything else, it has its disadvantages, too.

We cannot buy nonfood items like soap, detergent, and tissue paper and other things that you need for the home. Low-income people that live out in the rural area do not apply for food stamps because they cannot read or write and do not know how to fill out the application. Some do not have a way to get to the office to apply because they do not have a car or no money to pay someone to bring them to the welfare office. There are many counties in Georgia that mail food stamps to their clients. In Fort Valley we have to go to the courthouse to pick up the stamps. That makes it hard on people who do not live in the city. They have to wait until someone can bring them to town to get their stamps. It is really hard on the elderly who have to climb the courthouse steps to pick up their food stamps. Some people have also told me that because they live out of town and have no car, that they have to wait until someone can take them to the grocery store. One lady told me that it takes 4 or 5 days sometimes before she can use her stamps. My food stamps last my family about 3 weeks because of the family size.

Some families run out after 2 weeks. We try to make them last as long as possible. The reason I applied for food stamps is because my husband and myself were out of a job. We had no alternative but to turn to food stamps and that helps a lot. I hope this information can help keep the Food Stamp Program. Thank you very much for asking me to come.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Dean appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you very much, Mrs. Dean, for your testimony, and Ms. Merritt, thank you for being here with these two witnesses from Georgia. We will proceed to the next witness. Mr. Elza Wilson.

STATEMENT OF ELZA V. WILSON, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MOUNTAINEER FOOD BANK, ACCOMPANIED BY CARLA KNICELEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. WILSON. Congressman Hatcher, it is a pleasure for Mrs. Kniceley, the director of the Mountaineer Food Bank, and myself to be here with you today. And we consider it a distinct honor that we have been chosen by Second Harvest to testify on behalf of food banking in rural America. My personal experience is that I am a retired furniture dealer, retired in 1975, and since that time I have been working almost full time with various agencies in assisting the poor in West Virginia.

We speak from our first-hand experience from the Mountaineer Food Bank in Gassaway and our affiliate in Huntington, WV. Mrs. Kniceley has worked for our food bank for several years and for the last 2 years has served as our director. I was one of the organizers and have served as its first vice president, as its chairman of the finance committee, chairman of the personnel committee, and I am now serving as president of its board of directors. We can speak to you of some of the problems facing food banks today and also the tremendous success of the food bank program.

Since we started in 1981 our food bank has distributed 16.5 million pounds of products to 255 community pantries; 3.7 million of that was in 1988. This was accomplished last year with six full-time staff, three part-time staff and many, many volunteers. At the present time, we are approaching a cash-flow problem because of the increased cost of fuel, which has been approximately 20 percent in the last few weeks and the cost of transportation of those who are bringing the food into us.

Our cost of food coming in last year increased by 62 percent. While 74 percent of our product comes from out of the State and now we are having to pay cost of shipping for many our suppliers than at earlier times absorbed the shipping costs, I feel that other food banks are facing the same problems. But in addition to addressing the specifics of food banking, I believe that we should look at some of the issues that relate to hunger in rural America and at some of those root causes. One of those that I am very much concerned about is the formula that the FEMA board uses when they allocate funds to the rural counties.

I feel that this is a problem to the rural counties at this time in the way it is being administered. For instance, in West Virginia, 27 rural counties did not get a direct allocation. The county that I come from had been receiving $16,000 and $17,000 in previous years, but we were not eligible for a direct allocation this year because the statistics showed that we did not have 1,000 individuals registered as unemployed and seeking employment. We only had 849.

At the same time, our county has been designated as the second most depressed county in West Virginia. While we were being

denied a direct allocation, the FEMA board allocated for Kanawha County, WV, which is one of the most affluent counties in the State, $149,000 as a direct allocation. While at that time they were only setting aside $155,000 for all the other 27 rural counties that was not receiving funds.

I think this is a tragedy that needs to be corrected. Our Congressmen and Senators have been working on this and are very much concerned about it. FEMA has promised that they will look at it again. I believe one of the greatest things that could be done for hunger in rural America at the present time there is a vehicle that you already have in place, the McKinney Act, and I personally feel is being administrated in a way that discriminates against poor counties.

As I mentioned earlier, for the last several years I have been working almost full time as a volunteer with several organizations and through the agencies of the United Methodist Church. I have traveled to all sections of West Virginia and have seen first-hand the problems that are facing our people. We have for the past 8 years had a recession or depression, depending how you want to identify it.

In many of our counties, the economy is getting even progressively worse. The county that I lived in, as I say, is identified as the second-most depressed county in the State. This is where I grew up during what you refer to sometimes as the Great Depression, when 25 percent of our people were unemployed. But many times during the past few years, the official statistics of our county are listed with an unemployment above 20 percent and 3 or 4 months it went above 25.

This did not include those who have exhausted their unemployment benefits and are no longer a statistic. During those years you refer to as the Great Depression, we knew we were poor. But I never heard of anyone in our community that was hungry. But during the past few years, I have seen many families who are hungry and without food. A few months ago a church and community worker called and asked if I would go with her to visit a family that had been referred to her by the school counselor.

I went to that home with the church and community worker and a local pastor. These children had not been in school and they wanted to know if we could help to get them back in school. The conditions that we saw was a family of a father, mother and three school aged children, the conditions in that house was not fit for humans to live in. The children were not in school because they did not have winter clothes. And the only food in the house was a 10-pound bag of potatoes. A little 8-year-old boy was sitting on a chair eating a raw potato.

His father was working 2 and 3 days a week for a sawmill at minimum wages, no benefits, and not enough money to provide food for his family. During the last several years, we have been hearing a lot from Washington that we need to solve these problems back in our local area. And a lot can be accomplished through volunteers. I agree with this policy in theory.

But volunteers cannot work without resources. What we have accomplished at the Mountaineer Food Bank with the volunteers is an example of what volunteers can do and what they are doing.

But volunteers cannot accomplish very much unless they have a resource base to work from.

Many of our volunteers are unemployed, and they are donating their times and skills to help others to improve their quality of life. Many of our counties, my home county, for instance, we are struggling to try to feed the hungry, house the homeless, save our hospital, save our emergency squad, and our fire departments. Our county commission has cut their funds to where they are not supporting any of these projects that I have just mentioned.

Many of the families that our pantries are helping today were middle-income families just a few years ago. The problems in West Virginia are caused because we have lost so many of our basic industries, coal, steel, glass, and manufacturing. We just do not have enough jobs to support our wage earners. Some of the jobs that do come in contribute to people becoming poorer and in my personal opinion take advantage of the poor.

Businesses that come in and hire these poor people and will allow them to work just a few hours a week, not enough so they can have benefits, but just enough that they can get work in the few days a week without any benefits whatsoever and at minimum wage, and they work those people a few hours a day. I know one specific case where a young lady who was struggling to put food on the table for her family, working in one of those places was called out to work from 10 to 12 on Saturday morning and come back and work from 3 to 5 in the afternoon. This I think is contributing to the poor and taking advantages of them.

I have a map, Mr. Chairman, that I am sorry I did not have more of, I would like to leave this with you. It shows—it was one of the church projects that I worked with from the report of the "Working Group of the Appalachian Economic Crisis" to the Commission on Religion in Appalachia.

The map shows where the business is, where the economy is. The dark color is where it is the best and the red is where it is the worst. Chris and I were looking at this map a few moments ago, and I believe we found three counties in West Virginia that were shaded. Was that not right? I believe that is what it is, and the rest were either red, which were the lowest or pink, which was next to the lowest.

But as I look at this map, I realize that it is not only a problem of West Virginia. We recognize it so seriously because that is where we come from and that is where we see these people. But when you look at that map, you see those red counties all over the Nation, and you can see where the jobs are. I was telling Chris, when you take the first third or a little over a third of the Nation and look at it and look at those reds versus the blacks, it just almost causes me to believe that the economic clock has been turned back 125 years because the prosperous economy is along the coastlines, the waterways, with pockets of prosperity in others, but with many, many counties with the red.

So I believe that is the issue that is here before us. I am very much concerned in it because of the problem that we are having at the food bank in meeting our obligations. Food is not coming in as well as it did a few years ago, and now we are trucking with truck routes, delivering food on routes that extend from 130 to 500 miles

delivering food to the pantries throughout West Virginia. Our recent analyses show that we are losing on the food that we are trucking about 15 percent.

So unless we get help from grants or from some Federal help or some State help, we are going to have to start charging for delivery. The result is that when we charge for delivery, we will be serving less people because those agencies out there are having the same problem as we have. Many of them are having that cash-flow problem. The ones that were paying us cost-sharing promptly every month now sometimes we have to cut them off because at the end of 30 days we have to have our funds, they are just not meeting the needs even as well as they did a few months ago.

I thank you again for this opportunity, and Mrs. Kniceley is here to assist in any questions that you may ask. We feel that we are in a battle against hunger. It is a daily part of our lives because each day we are on a battlefield facing an enemy. But if we can help one family or one child we feel it is worthwhile. Thank you

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wilson appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Wilson. The next witness is Mr. Rebstock.

STATEMENT OF CHRIS REBSTOCK, EASTERN REGION MANAGER, SECOND HARVEST NATIONAL FOOD BANK NETWORK, BALTIMORE, MD

Mr. REBSTOCK. I want to thank you for this opportunity to address the subcommittee on the difficulties faced by those organizations attempting to serve our hungry neighbors in rural areas of our country. Inasmuch as you have heard or will hear from others more qualified to discuss the extent of rural poverty, I will confine my remarks to the issue of logistics as it relates to the provision of services within the food banking network.

As direct service providers, we recognize and hope that you recognize that it is not in our mission to identify and address the root causes of hunger. We support such programs as the Food Stamp Program, WIC, and other tested and true means to provide assistance to those who need it, but most certainly food banking is not the answer to the hunger problem. It is only part of the solution. I am the eastern region manager for Second Harvest, the National Food Bank Network. As used throughout my testimony, the term "food bank" is defined as a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation which plays essentially a wholesaling role in the delivery of donated inventory from donors to direct service agencies which assist individuals.

This differs from the sometimes more common usage of the term as a food distribution site serving the public directly. This type of program I will refer to as a "pantry" or a "soup kitchen." To further distinguish between these two terms, a pantry prepares and distributes boxes or bags of products to be taken home for use by a client. A soup kitchen prepares and serves meals on site.

I offer my comments from the perspective of my current position with Second Harvest as well as from my previous experience as a food bank board member and executive director in Pittsburgh, PA.

Second Harvest's role in the food banking community is multifaceted. Probably our most important function is to develop and maintain positive relationships with all levels of the food industry to generate donations of product to the network. These donations primarily consist of usable but unmarketable products such as short-coded product, mislabels, short fills, surplus test products, et cetera. In 1988, the Second Harvest Network distributed more than 411 million pounds of such product—valued at more than $700 million—to over 38,000 charitable organizations through our 200-plus member food banks. In 1989, Second Harvest as an organization will reach two milestones, our 10th anniversary and the distribution of our 2-billionth pound of food.

Other ways in which we serve the network are standards development, compliance monitoring, training and technical assistance, fund development and public relations services. Translating these services to cost effective practical operations in the rural areas of the country is not easy. While there are viable effective programs operating in some areas, the message which has consistently been received throughout Second Harvest history is that service delivery in rural communities is logistically and economically difficult. There are several serious impediments to such delivery. These include transportation, agency identification, agency development and lack of resources. These impediments pose several resulting dangers such as food safety, financial instability, improper use of product, and most importantly insecurity and continued suffering for the ultimate client in need.

Transportation is a problem at several levels. First, the food banks are generally responsible for picking up donations at the donor's dock. And these donations typically are anywhere from two cases to full trailer loads of product. While most food banks own and operate their own trucks, these are usually smaller vehicles used for local hauling purposes. Those larger loads which are traveling over the road are normally transported by common carrier at the food bank's expense. It is not unusual, therefore, for a food bank in a rural area to have a transportation budget of anywhere from $75,000 to $100,000 a year, and often this is not enough. Most food banks are heavily reliant on donated transportation services. While such services are available, they are in fact very costly to the food bank in terms of staff time and effort to coordinate them.

The food banks, however, are in better shape than their member agencies are in this regard. A food bank service area may be anywhere from 5,000 to 25,000 square miles. Obviously, this means that those charities which use the food bank as a resource may have considerable distances to travel in order to pick up their orders. Because the member charities are usually church or civic organizations dependent on volunteers with their own vehicles, the distances involved pose a significant barrier to obtaining services.

Most rural food banks have responded to this problem by establishing delivery routes within their service areas. Typically the food bank would pull the orders of several agencies in a geographic area and send their own truck off to a designated offloading spot. The agencies involved will meet the food bank's truck and take their orders from that spot back to their sites.

Even with this arrangement, however, it is not uncommon for the agencies to have to travel 30 to 50 miles one way. Such a solution, of course, is expensive. A refrigerated 22-foot truck which can carry 10 pallets of product weighing approximately 25,000 pounds costs in excess of $45,000. The operating costs including driver, maintenance, fuel, insurance, et cetera are considerable as well.

Finally, the client who ultimately receives this product from the soup kitchen or from the pantry is often faced with transportation difficulties. By definition, rural areas require the travel of significant distances most often with little or no public transportation. Logically, some of those who are most in need are least likely to have access to the transportation which would allow them to avail themselves of services.

The most significant danger associated with inadequate transportation systems is food safety. As trends in food industry packaging and preparation processes turn more and more heavily toward refrigerated and frozen products, so too do the types of donations received by the food banks. The obvious concerns related to the maintenance of proper temperature control and the potential for inadequate control are significant.

A second problem is that of agency identification and outreach. Communications and development are difficult in rural areas and require a great deal of time and effort. From the food bank's perspective it is quite a task to identify potentially eligible agencies in the expanses of its service area and to work with those agencies to develop and ensure compliance with acceptable record-keeping, food storage, and client qualifying standards.

Again, this process is very costly in terms of finances and time. Because there are so few existing agencies, the food banks must invest a great deal of effort in actually identifying an eligible entity and helping them to set up a program. Even when it is successful, the follow-up efforts are quite demanding as is the community outreach to make potential clients aware of the new program's existence.

The third major problem relates to lack of general resources. Both transportation and agency outreach have been referenced as costly but essential components of a Food Bank Program. Food banks generally charge a handling fee for their services which usually does not provide more than 60 percent of their operating revenue. The balance of their funding typically comes from corporate and foundation grants and a small percentage from public contributions and Government grants.

Unfortunately, rural food banks lack access to both product and financial resources at the local level. As there are very few manufacturing plants or distribution centers located within the service areas of rural food banks, they are highly dependent on Second Harvest and their sister food banks for inventory. Of course, this then adds to the trucking expense.

Likewise, there are a few large financial resources available. Those businesses which are located in rural areas are typically smaller employers with limited charitable capability. While they may be generous in funding services to their communities, such grants are small in relation to the need. In order to remain viable and provide some service, most rural food banks are prevented

from extending their reach to the neediest segments of their service areas by economics and logistics. Again, the result is that some of those most in need are least able to avail themselves of it.

Again, thank you for giving this issue your attention. Be assured that Second Harvest shares your interest and stands ready to work with you and others to address this matter as you continue your efforts. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rebstock appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Mr. Rebstock. Ms. Barr, I would like to ask you and I should know the answer to this, but I do not, who decides which counties in Georgia mail stamps to recipients and which counties do not? Is that local or is that done at the state level?

Ms. BARR. County commissioners decide.

Mr. HATCHER. The county commissioners in each particular county can decide how to go about that?

Ms. BARR. Yes, sir.

Mr. HATCHER. I was interested in Mrs. Dean's testimony that it was sort of a hardship in Peach County, Fort Valley, GA, for those having to live out in the rural areas having to come all the way to the courthouse. What is being done in Dougherty County at the present time?

Ms. BARR. We have direct mail issuance in Dougherty County. We have two case workers who handle those caseloads. They have about 500 households per worker.

Mr. HATCHER. I see. I was interested in your concern about folks not being able to verify the utility bill and so forth and that being an impediment to their receiving food stamps. Why can't you call the utility company and verify that as opposed to them having to go there? Because of some regulation or law or what?

Ms. BARR. Yes. In the food stamp manual, it states that the burden of verification is on the client, and I would also like to add that the case workers assist as much as possible to get this verification, but due to the fact that their caseloads are so high, I am sure that they miss quite a few.

Mr. HATCHER. But I guess if they had time to do it, they could call the utility company.

Ms. BARR. That is correct.

Mr. HATCHER. But when you are serving 294 households per case worker, that is pretty difficult to do that kind of thing.

Ms. BARR. Yes, and that is just one aspect of the regulation. You know there are several things that have to be verified. I would like to add, too, that out of the 159 counties in Georgia, 149 are on direct mail issuance.

Mr. HATCHER. Mrs. Dean, it sounds like you need to talk to your county commissioners.

Mrs. DEAN. That is right. Seems like we do because it is kind of hard on us. But ideally in Peach County, you have to go directly to the commissioners, and then they always tell you this, that we are working out of the office to verify, make sure you get your stamps. That way we know the person that is getting them really going to get them. You know, they say mail fraud. But a lot of things they

just do not want to change it. They just want us to come to the courthouse to pick them up.

Mr. HATCHER. You indicated that in your particular family, you usually give out of the food stamps about the third week in the month and some folks give out after 2 weeks.

Mrs. DEAN. Yes.

Mr. HATCHER. What do you after that? How does that impact on your particular family?

Mrs. DEAN. With me when I was working and my husband, we saved. We have a deep freezer, so I can always go back to something where most people cannot. But I can because I got a lot of people that can help me out when I need. Like I said, in Fort Valley a lot of people do not have that.

Mr. HATCHER. Is there any place in Fort Valley where people can get food for free when they need it, people who run out of food stamps? Do you have any food banks or anything of that sort?

Mrs. DEAN. I really do not know. So I could not answer that because I do not know.

Mr. HATCHER. You probably would know if it was there, would you not?

Mrs. DEAN. Yes, I sure would.

Mr. HATCHER. Mr. Wilson, how do corporations and other potential donors of food learn about Mountaineer Food Bank? How do you put the word out or how is that done?

Mr. WILSON. Let us let Ms. Kniceley answer that. She is the one who is responsible for that work.

Ms. KNICELEY. We have two people that work statewide to develop resources within the State, but we have found each year our in-State resources have gotten less and less due to the lack of manufacturing in the State.

Mr. HATCHER. Well, how do you entice donors or make potential donors outside the State aware?

Ms. KNICELEY. We go through Second Harvest. That is where they come into the picture.

Mr. HATCHER. OK.

Ms. KNICELEY. They do the solicitation on a national level and that is why our trucking is so tremendous. A few years back a lot of our cereal products would come from Pennsylvania. Here lately a lot of cereal products are coming out of Michigan. It costs a bit more to transport from Michigan than it does to Pennsylvania.

Mr. HATCHER. What are the kinds of food products that you would get a tractor trailer load of at one time from a major corporation?

Ms. KNICELEY. Cereal products, maybe jelly, pickles, around Christias we had a very good donor to give us turkey products, skme pastas, sometimes sauces, different types of sauces and that type of thing.

Mr. HATCHER. In your type of distribution, are you able to work with fresh vegetables or is it almost always a processed or frozen product?

Ms. KNICELEY. It is more frozen product because our distribution of fresh product—agencies call as much as a week in advance and place an order with us. So if we had fresh vegetables, they would

have to come in and transport their own product as opposed to us putting it on a truck and shipping it out.

Mr. HATCHER. I appreciate very much each of you being here today and I appreciate your testimony and what you do for hunger in this country. Thank you.

Our next and final panel is composed of three witnesses: Mr. Robert Greenstein, director, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities here in Washington; Ms. Ellen Haas, executive director, Public Voice for Food and Health Policy in Washington; Ms. Kathryn Bicking, Virginia Legal Aid Society, Emporia, VA. I would like to welcome you witnesses. And unless there is some objection we will hear from these panel members in the order in which I call their names. First, Mr. Robert Greenstein.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT GREENSTEIN, DIRECTOR, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Mr. GREENSTEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee today. I am Robert Greenstein, director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonprofit organization that conducts research and analysis on a range of public policy issues affecting low-income families and individuals that has an emphasis on issues relating to hunger, poverty and domestic food programs.

Prior to starting the center, I had the opportunity to serve in USDA as Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service in 1979–80 during the Carter administration, and as Special Assistant to Secretary Bergland for Food and Nutrition Issues before that. Mr. Chairman, I would like to start by commending you and the ranking minority member, Mr. Emerson, for holding the first hearing of the subcommittee in the 101st Congress on rural hunger. To me it brings back memories of when I was at USDA and Secretary Bergland who was, of course, a former Member of this committee instructed us, I think, at least once a year that one of the key tests of our management of these programs was their performance in rural America.

During the past year, our center has been conducting a research project on a variety of issues related to rural poverty funded by the Ford Foundation. I would like to share with you today some of our findings that may be relevant to the subcommittee as it delves into this issue of rural hunger. Many Americans regard poverty primarily as an urban issue, and while there is little question that the concentrated poverty of America's large cities is serious and demands attention, we too often tend to overlook the serious poverty that also marks rural areas.

As has been stated earlier today, poverty rates are actually higher in rural than in urban areas. In 1987, the last year for which we have census data, 16.9 percent—that is more than one out of every six residents—of rural America lived below the poverty line, which was about $9,000 a year for a family of three. By contrast, one out of every eight residents of a metropolitan area lived below the poverty line. Now when you mention this, people often say that is understandable because the urban areas include the suburbs.

A lot of this material is in the report that I think you and other members have that we released last month. What we did was to look at the census data, not for all of the metropolitan areas, but just for the cities—the central cities is the term the Census Bureau uses. What we found is that the poverty rate is nearly as high in rural America as in the Nation's central cities: 16.9 percent for the rural areas and 18.6 percent for the central cities. Over the past decade, poverty has risen just as sharply in the rural areas as in the cities. And in fact, the rural poverty rate in 1987, the fifth year of an economic recovery, was as high as the rural poverty rate in 1975, the deepest recession year of the 1970's.

It is interesting and disturbing that among most racial, ethnic, age, and demographic groups the poverty rates are now as high or higher in rural America as in the central cities. Of particular interest is the fact that despite the popular conception of concentrated black poverty in the Nation's cities, blacks living in rural areas are much more likely to be poor than blacks living in the central cities.

Among blacks, about one out of three living in the cities was poor in 1987, a very high poverty rate. But more than two-fifths, 44 percent of all black Americans living in rural areas of our country lived below the poverty line last year. Among whites and hispanics, the poverty rates are about the same in rural areas as in the cities.

Among female-headed families and two-parent families, the poverty rates are about the same in urban as in rural areas. Among children, the rate is a little higher in the central cities, but it is close in the rural areas, and among black children, in fact, the rates are much higher in the rural areas. Fifty-seven percent of all black children in rural America, more than half, live below the poverty line according to the official figures of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Poverty is also as high or higher among the elderly in rural as in urban areas, and the single most stunning figure here is among elderly women in rural areas who live alone or with nonrelatives and are black, 80 percent, four of every five, live below the poverty line. While the poverty rates are generally similar or in some cases higher in rural areas than those in the cities, the composition of the poverty population differs significantly.

As I think Johnsrud, the Extension Service Administrator, said earlier today, the rural poor are more likely than the urban poor to live in two-parent families, to work, to be white, and to be elderly. One of the dominant characteristics of rural poverty is the extent to which rural poor families are two-parent families. Of all the rural poor who live in families, more than 60 percent live in two-parent families.

Even more striking is the extent to which the rural poor are likely to work. Nearly two of every three poor families living in rural areas contains at least one worker and nearly one-quarter have at least two workers. Finally, on a regional basis, the rural poor are most likely to live in the South. Over half of all rural poor in the United States live in the South.

I just want to dwell a little bit more on the issue of the rural-working poor. As I noted, a large majority of rural poor families are families in which somebody works, but the family is still poor. Many of the rural families that do not work are families in which

the only adults are elderly, disabled, or ill. So we get the following census figures: 70 percent, or 7 out of every 10 rural poor family heads who were not ill, disabled, or retired were people who worked during the year. Among rural two-parent families that were poor, and where the family head was not disabled, retired or ill, 86 percent, more than five out of every six, were people who worked during the year.

Not only is the proportion of the poor that work higher in rural than in urban areas, but the proportion of those who work but still fall into poverty is also higher in rural areas. The census data show that poverty rates in rural areas for all types of working families, white, black, single-parent, two-parent, full-time worker, part-time worker—under every category, the poverty rate is much higher for people who work in rural areas than in urban areas. In fact, the poverty rate for rural working families is about double the poverty rate for urban working families. Stated another way, this means that a family in which the household head works is twice as likely to be poor in rural America as in urban America.

What this tells us that in rural America even more than in urban America, work does not provide an assurance that a family will not be poor. Why is poverty this high, and why has it risen substantially in rural America over the past decade? There are a few factors here. Economic factors are very key. Rural areas were hit harder than urban areas by the recessions of the early 1980's and they recovered less during the recovery of recent years.

The rural unemployment rate was lower than the urban rate throughout the 1970's. It has been higher than the urban unemployment rate every year since 1980. The rural unemployment rate rose more than the metro rate during the recessions. It declined less during the recoveries. Rural areas are also more likely to be where we have pockets of persistently high unemployment. Of the people who lived in counties where the unemployment rate equalled or exceeded 10 percent in 1987, over half of those people were in rural counties.

Wage levels are also lower in rural areas. In fact, that is the main reason the poverty rates are twice as high in rural areas. Poverty rates for a family with a full-time worker are twice in rural areas what they are in urban areas. The data from USDA's Economic Research Service tells us that the average rural worker earned over $1,100 less in 1986 than in 1979, after we adjust for inflation. That earnings fell faster during the recession among rural than among urban workers, and then recovered less during the recovery. So that by 1986 the average earnings for an urban worker had made up all the lost ground since 1979, but the average earnings for a rural worker were well below where they had been in 1979. And now the average earnings of a rural worker is more than 25 percent below the average earnings of an urban worker.

There are a number of factors here. We often hear about the farm problem. Perhaps even larger is what has been happening in manufacturing. A number of the manufacturing industries in rural America have had jobs lost overseas during the 1980's, and this is a significant issue. Another issue is the low level of education and skills in many rural areas. Many of the new jobs being created in our increasingly technological economy require increased levels of

education and skills and in some rural areas, many of the rural poor may not have those skills.

There is a new study put out by the State of North Carolina called "Chronic Unemployment in Rural North Carolina", and it found in the rural counties that it surveyed that of those who were unemployed in these rural areas, when asked why they had difficulty obtaining or keeping a job, 70 percent cited as the main reason either that they could not read well enough or that they otherwise did not have adequate skills or training.

Finally, reductions in government assistance at Federal and State levels both have contributed significantly to the increase in poverty rates in rural and urban areas alike. Census data tell us that in 1979 nearly one of every five families with children that was poor before getting government benefits was lifted out of poverty by those benefits. But by 1987 only about 1 out of every 10 families with children that was poor before getting Government benefits was lifted out of poverty by those benefits.

There have been sharp reductions in the purchasing power of public assistance benefits, contractions in unemployment insurance coverage, and reductions in food stamp assistance. Adding to all of this, and Mr. Panetta raised this earlier, have been increased housing costs. About 2 months ago the Census Bureau and HUD issued the results of a long awaited national survey on housing conditions in our country. These results provided the first data ever published by the Census Bureau on the housing costs of poor households.

Our center last month issued a lengthy analysis of the census data. The data are very disturbing and I think they go a long way toward explaining the worsening of hunger problems in recent years despite economic recovery. Under official HUD standards, promulgated in the early 1980's during the Reagan administration, housing is considered affordable for a low-income household if it consumes no more than 30 percent of the household's income. What the new census data tells us is that 72 percent of all poor households in rural America pay more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing.

In other words, nearly three of every four poor rural households bear housing costs outside the range that HUD considers affordable. Nearly half of all poor rural households pay at least half of their incomes for housing. More than one in every four pays at least 70 percent of their incomes for housing. I would note that many of the poor households in the rural areas not only bear high housing costs but also live in substandard housing. The new data show that 23 percent of all rural poor households, and interestingly 28 percent of all rural households getting food stamps, live in substandard housing.

The census data also tell us that while poor rural households constitute less than one-fifth of all the rural households, they occupy 44 percent of the rural housing units with rats, 54 percent of the rural housing units with holes in the floor, and 55 percent of the rural units without complete bathrooms inside the homes.

These rather grim data help explain the presence of hunger in rural America. When large numbers of rural residents are poor, even when they work and when housing costs eat up so large a share of the limited income, the potential for a serious hunger

problem is large. To combat we need effective food assistance policies and programs. While the Food Stamp Program, TEFAP and other food assistance programs reach substantial numbers of low-income Americans in rural areas, the programs could do better.

In addition and importantly, the level of food assistance provided to poor households meets significantly less of the need today than it did only a few years ago despite passage of the Hunger Prevention Act last year. That is chiefly due to two reasons, the disappearance of much of USDA's surplus stocks, resulting in sharp cutbacks in the amount of food distributed through the TEFAP program, and in the last several months rapid increases in food prices that have significantly outpaced food stamp benefits.

In 1986 and 1987, $850 million a year was distributed to poor families and poor households through TEFAP. In 1983 through 1985, $1 billion a year was distributed. Last year, that fell to $585 million. This year fiscal 1989, the 1988 level is likely to decline by another 50 to 75 percent despite the purchases of food required under the Hunger Prevention Act.

That, of course, has a particularly rural impact, given as we heard earlier today that over half of the TEFAP distribution sites are in rural areas. Second, due to sharp food price increases, food stamp allotments are now lagging well behind actual food costs. The USDA's latest data is that in March it cost $319 for a family of four to purchase the thrifty food plan. The maximum food stamp allotment is $300 for a family with no other income.

That gap is larger now than at any time since the early 1980's, and it is because of the rapidly rising food prices in recent months. Third, the Los Angeles Times reported last month that donations to food to food banks appear to be dropping. The Times reported that belt tightening throughout the food industry, spurred in part by threats of mergers and takeovers, appears to be leading to a drop in corporate food donations to food banks.

And fourth and finally, the budget reductions of the early 1980's resulted in a long-term reduction in food stamp assistance. Total food stamp benefits in fiscal 1988 were nearly $800 million lower than in 1981 after adjusting for inflation and food prices. Finally, there has been a decline in food stamp participation as well. In 1980, for every 100 people in poverty, there were 68 food stamp recipients. Now for every 100 people in poverty, there are 58 food stamp recipients. There were 3 million more people living in poverty in 1987 than in 1980. About 1 million fewer getting food stamps in an average month. And a recent USDA study provides further evidence that the proportion of poor eligible for food stamps who actually get them has declined since 1980.

I think that means that efforts to enhance food assistance programs in combatting rural hunger are needed and such efforts, I think, necessarily have to encompass the Food Stamp Program. Not only is it the largest food assistance program. It is by far the most important in rural areas. I mentioned a lot of census data here. Let me mention one final figure that tells us just how very important the Food Stamp Program is in rural America.

Two weeks ago, the Census Bureau which is a constant source of information, turned out one further report. And this new report studied a 32-month period, and it looked at who got benefits during

a 32-month period from 1983 through 1986. What it found is that one of every six residents of rural America, not one of every six poor people, one of every six of all people in rural America received food stamps for at least 1 month in this 32-month period.

It found that only 1 in 25 residents of rural America received food stamps every month in that period, meaning that for many rural Americans, more than we have realized before, there are periods of temporary hardship during which they rely on food stamps to get through that period. Let me just close by saying that attached to the end of the testimony is a list of issues that are possible suggestions for the subcommittee to look at as it delves into this area.

You, Mr. Chairman, have touched on a number of them in your questions. How to provide more mail issuance in rural areas which improves access? How to improve access for the working poor and people who travel long distances? How to improve one-stop shopping? Areas of this sort. I commend you for holding this hearing, and hope the subcommittee will steadfastly pursue this effort to look at rural hunger and find bipartisan solutions to help ease the hunger problems in rural America. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Greenstein appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you very much. Ms. Haas.

STATEMENT OF ELLEN HAAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC VOICE FOR FOOD AND HEALTH POLICY

Ms. HAAS. Thank you, Chairman Hatcher. I am Ellen Haas, executive director of Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, a nonprofit consumer research, education, and advocacy organization that focuses on food, agriculture, and health issues. I have submitted a lengthy statement, and I would like to request that that be in the record, and I will summarize that statement.

Mr. HATCHER. Without objection the entire statement will be admitted.

Ms. HAAS. I also would like to begin by joining in the commendations that are very well deserved this morning for this hearing on your behalf and Representative Emerson. It is an important beginning for this congressional session to be looking at a problem that has far too often been neglected. And we appreciate very much the opportunity to be here today to share with you the findings and recommendations that are based on our 4 years of research on the nutritional conditions of our Nation's rural poor.

As you know, and as this hearing has spoken about this morning, the rural poor are among the most invisible of Americans, even though the poverty rate in rural communities is considerably higher than that of our Nation's metropolitan areas and rivals that of America's core inner-city areas.

In many ways, too, the profile of the rural poor is quite different from that of the urban counterparts. In comparison to the urban poor, the nearly 10 million rural poor have special characteristics and Mr. Greenstein has just alluded to those. I would repeat them, because they serve as barriers to their participation and seeking of an adequate diet. To begin with, the rural poor are more likely to

live in two-parent households. They are more likely to have a job, and more likely to be less educated and oftentimes they are older and nonminority.

With poverty comes the harsh realities of all too often being forced to make choices between food and shelter, between food and heating, and between food and taking a sick child to the doctor. Add to poverty the rigors imposed by living in rural poor communities with its extreme isolation, the vast distances between neighboring towns and the low concentration of people and the likelihood of obtaining an adequate diet becomes even more remote.

Public Voice has examined the nutritional status of the rural poor over these past 4 years through comprehensive data collection and analysis of national nutrition data, previously untapped for what it could reveal about the rural poor. Our 1986 study "Rising Poverty/Declining Health, the Nutritional Status of the Rural Poor," found that the rural poor consumed grossly inadequate amounts of the essential nutrients, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron. Almost one of every two poor persons living in rural communities fail to consume even two-thirds of their daily recommended dietary allowances for these vital nutrients.

Even when compared to the inner city poor, USDA surveys have shown that rural poor women and children have lower intakes of key nutrients than their urban counterparts. As a direct result of this poor nutrition, we found that many exhibit clinical symptoms of advanced nutritional deterioration. Data from the Department of Health and Human Services found that the rural poor are one and one-half times more likely to have vitamin A and vitamin C serum blood levels below acceptable standards than on the rural nonpoor.

Perhaps most disturbing of all, we found that rural poor children were two and one-half times more likely than the rural nonpoor to experience growth stunting, an important indicator of chronic malnutrition. Our research has also documented the alarming status of infant health in the poorest rural counties, another indicator of poor nutrition and inadequate access to maternal and infant health care.

Analyzing data from the National Center for Health Statistics for America's 322 poorest rural counties from 1975 to 1985, we found that the rates of infant mortality and infants born at dangerously low weight were dramatically higher in those counties than in the Nation as a whole. These findings were released in our study last year "Off to a Poor Start/Infant Health in Rural America." Moreover, the study found that low-birth-weight rates in rural counties, already higher than national rates, had increased significantly during the 1980's. This trend dramatically reversed previous years of progress.

But despite these nutritional vulnerabilities which are indeed extreme, the rural poor remain disproportionately underserved by our Federal Food Assistant Programs. For example, in 1985, 46 percent of households living below the poverty level in urban areas participated in the Food Stamp Program compared to only 40 percent of rural poor households. That same year 73 percent of urban poor households with school aged children less than 18 years old had children receiving free or reduced school lunch meals while

only 66 percent of their rural counterparts received free or reduced school lunch meals.

We found in our national survey on the summer feeding program other disparities that give us concern; 11.8 percent of the urban poor children participated in the Summer Food Service Program, a woefully inadequate number. But yet it was almost double, or more than double, the amount of children who were participating from rural poor households.

Only 5 percent of rural poor children participated in the Summer Food Service Program. While the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 addressed many of the barriers that prevented the rural poor from participating in Federal Food Assistance Programs, and this was really the first time that legislation gave particular attention to the needs of the rural poor, a great deal more still needs to be done. We have listed in our testimony four major recommendations for the Food Stamp Program.

To begin with, the vehicle asset limit should be adjusted. Many of the rural poor must depend on their vehicles to haul water, or wood for heat in the winter, often over rugged dirty roads to homes lacking indoor plumbing or piped in fuel. It is ironic that these very families, often the neediest of all, are virtually excluded from participating in the program due to the value of their automobile. Therefore, we recommend that such households either be exempted from the vehicle asset limit, or that the limit be raised for such households to a limit that would allow for a modest but reliable vehicle.

The limit, which has not been changed or increased since 1977 should be raised to at least $5,500 for all households and be increased annually. Second, another issue that has come up continually today and one that is long past due and deserving attention, and that is the question of mail issuance that should be available to all rural residents.

In 1986 we held a public hearing in Georgia at the Carter Presidential Center on the barriers to the Food Stamp Program for the rural poor, and I remember the countless number of elderly citizens who spoke of paying others to drive them into town and the cost of coming into town to pick up their food stamps virtually equaled the amount of benefits they received. And this is one area that we feel is well deserving of immediate attention.

Also the household definition should be adjusted to better address the needs of rural poor residents, who double up oftentimes and share housing with other families because current rules combine the income and resources of close relatives who live together. Even if they are not supporting each other many rural poor are seriously penalized. This adjustment would also benefit many needy migrant farm workers who typically double and triple up in labor camps while working outside of their home bases. And finally we believe there is a need to go further with our outreach efforts so that we are promoting and initiating greater outreach efforts particularly to destigmatize the program, which is a particular barrier in rural poor communities and provide the necessary funds to carry out these activities.

The summer food programs for children are another area. Although they are not in the jurisdiction of this committee, but one

that we hope you will support changes currently being considered by Mr. Hawkins' Education and Labor Committee that would address a number of the programs' inadequacies in serving rural poor children. Finally, we are concerned about the need to improve the nutritional status of the rural poor by expanding the access and the availability of fruits and vegetables in rural poor communities. Despite the belief that the rural poor have access to fruits and vegetables because they live in the country and can grow their own, this is absolutely not the case. Our research indicates that fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin A and vitamin C are the foods most lacking in the diets of the rural poor.

Therefore, we recommend a set of approaches that Congress can take to address this problem. To begin with, we suggest that there be an authorization for funds necessary to allow all 50 States to participate in the Farmers Market Coupon Program that is going on now in 10 States and whose success has been well-documented.

Also, we would suggest the requirement that USDA encourage participating farmers to accept food stamps by easing the food stamp certification requirements for farmers. The whole issue of farmers markets is an opportunity for raising both the nutritional status of the rural poor and at the same time benefiting those farmers. And also encouraging the formation and expansion of local and State gleaning programs, and finally there is an opportunity in the rural development bill to include initiatives for food and nutrition so that we can expand the access of fruits and vegetables and also low cost affordable food in rural communities. In summary, hunger in rural America is a very serious and pressing problem that we are delighted that you have begun this inquiry and look forward to your congressional solutions.

We hope that the time has arrived when the misconceptions that continually undermine the public's and the policymaker's willingness to take rural hunger seriously can be dispelled. I would like to thank you. In holding this important hearing, we believe it is evidence of the subcommittee's commitment to improve the nutritional well-being of the rural poor, and we look forward to working with you in this important endeavor. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Haas appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Ms. Haas, and thank you for your testimony.

Ms. Bicking, we welcome you and your entire statement will be admitted into the record and at this time would recognize you for whatever remarks or summary you would like to make.

STATEMENT OF KATHY BICKING, PARALEGAL, VIRGINIA LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Ms. BICKING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. My first introduction to the Food Stamp Program was back in 1969 when I was a recipient of food stamps and of the AFDC Program. For the last 11 years, I have been an advocate for legal aid programs first in Iowa and now in Virginia and during that period of time have represented a lot of rural households in the Food Stamp Program. For several years in Iowa,

I was representing many farm households who were applying for, and over 50 percent of them were being erroneously denied food stamps. I have noticed a definite difference in some of the characteristics between the rural households in Iowa and the rural households in southside of Virginia.

However, some of the barriers remain the same: a lack of transportation. You have heard that several times today. That remains a barrier. Theoretically, it should not be a barrier. Congress has many times addressed this, has tried to make it more accessible. Looking at the regulations, the application can be mailed to households, the in-person interview can be waived, and telephone interviews can take place, in-home interviews can be arranged, verification can be secured by the workers, and the food stamps can be mailed to the households. So theoretically, a household never should have to come in to the food stamp office to get food stamps.

Realistically, it does not work that way. Most households are not aware that they can have applications mailed to them. That seems to be one of the better kept secrets in the Food Stamp Program. Households are not aware until they actually go into the office to apply for food stamps. Once households have actually gotten to the office, then there seems to be a consensus amongst the food stamp workers that if the household has been able to get their once, they can get there after that to provide verification or whatever.

Telephone interviews are good if the household has a telephone. Food stamp supervisor in rural Virginia estimated that 45 percent of her caseload or her clients did not have telephones. We find that is true with our clients at Legal Aid. There are approximately 18 counties in Virginia that do not issue mail issuance of food stamps so there are still rural people having to travel to pick up their food stamps and other advocates have reported to me that they have had clients who have had to pay $5 to someone to go in and pick up $10 worth of food stamps. A couple of the recommendations I would have to hopefully take care of some of those problems would be to increase the satellite offices.

We currently serve four counties in rural Virginia. There are no satellite food stamp offices in those four counties. I would also suggest that possibly for those households that receive a minimum of $10 to $20 a month in food stamp benefits be allowed the option to receive 2 or 3 months of food stamp benefits at a time. Most of these households are comprised of elderly individuals with fixed incomes.

I would also recommend that there be an increase in the allotment levels. The lack of transportation in the rural community keeps people away from the larger competitive supermarkets. So the fact that they have to pay someone to go in and pick up their food stamps and added that they may actually have to take a taxi or pay someone to take them to a grocery store even further reduces their food-purchasing power.

A problem that has been plaguing farmers for years is what I refer to as the two-party check issue. Many farmers when they sell their grain or their livestock receive a check made out to the farmer and to the lender. And the farmer will then take into the lender, sign it over, and the lender most of the time will say thank you very much, and we will see you again when you have more

money for us. It is very rarely that the farmer is actually provided any income from this check. And the times that I have actually seen farm households provided income by the lender, it has been to pay for life insurance and health insurance policies. It has not been to allow that household to buy food and other basic purposes.

Under the current food stamp regulations, these households, the gross income of that check is considered as available income when determining income eligibility for those households. So in actuality, they are not, they do not have access to all of that income. And in most instances, they do not have access to any of it. You have heard a recommendation regarding the standard medical deduction. I am not going to highlight that. I think that has been explained, but that is a recommendation that I would make also.

I am finding elderly and disabled people becoming very confused about what they are required to do in order to have their medical deductions allowed. They will come into my office and particularly in the southside of Virginia, I have had to do a lot of handholding of clients, to walk through them not only the food stamp system but the AFDC application, SSI applications, because the problem that I am going to get into later is the illiteracy problem.

I would also recommend mandatory outreach. I know that currently the States have an option of providing outreach, and I believe there is currently an allowance of 50 percent of Federal participation right with that. There are actually elderly people in this country who still believe that if they apply for food stamps, they are going to lose all the resources that they have.

We had an elderly gentleman come into our office in Iowa who was being evicted because his home is being redtagged. He was getting a little over $200 social security. He had never heard about the SSI Program. He had never heard about the Food Stamp Program. And the attorney in our office had to spend hours with him to convince him that it would be OK to apply for SSI and food stamps, and that in doing so he really would not lose any of the social security that he already had.

I think outreach needs to be done. I would recommend that it be done not solely by the State agency but in coordination with other local community agencies. I have seen in the rural area more of a distrust for quote "welfare departments." When I worked for the program in Iowa, our office was housed in Sioux City, IA, and that had a population of 80,000. So I had some comparison in terms of what was going on in the rural and in the urban area.

And I found that true in Iowa of the distrust and yet the same clients trusted the workers in the community action agencies or in the extension offices. They seemed to be nonthreatening or for whatever reason believed those people. So I think if outreach were being done, it would be beneficial for client and for potential clients to have it done through the other agencies in the area that are more trusted by the poor people.

I thought before—after 10 years of working in Iowa working with poor people, I thought I understood really what poverty was all about. When I moved down to Virginia, I was absolutely appalled by the high rate of illiteracy. The community I live in now has a population of about 4,800. It is estimated that 60 percent of the adult work force, age 25 and over, in that community are illiterate.

I have clients who come into my office who do not understand the notices they receive. They may understand why they are being terminated from the Food Stamp Program, but they do not necessarily understand that they can reapply if their situation changes.

I have had clients tell me whether it is from the Food Stamp Program, the AFDC Program, SSI, they will get a denial and they will assume that what the State agency or the bureaucracy is saying. They will not challenge that. And they will go without. I had a food stamp client who last summer was part of a household. She was living with 2 children, a 19-year-old daughter and a 16-year-old son. The 16-year-old son was not in school and he was the only one bringing in an income, earned income.

He voluntarily quit his job. That terminated food stamps for the whole household. The individual household members went their separate ways, staying with other extended family members. My client moved in with her cousin. Now the notice that she got from the State agency when those food stamps were terminated told her that she would be ineligible for 3 months, but that if her son started work again she might be eligible.

Prior to the time that she came into our office and talked with me, she had gone to the State agency, the local office to apply for food from the food bank. And the service worker who gave this food said now this is all you can get, and do not come back. And that woman never went back. When she came into my office, I talked with her for about 10 minutes and I packed her up and put her in my car, took her down to the local office, had her apply for expedited food stamps. In a couple days she had them. But if no one would have intervened, if no one would have taken her down there, that woman probably would never have gone back into that office even though she had been eligible for food stamps for some time.

I think that we are all in this country have a responsibility to fight illiteracy, and I think that is true for the Food Stamp Program as well. I think one way that that can be done is to implement a literacy education component in the work registration and job search requirement. There are a lot of communities who are working to develop literacy programs. So I do not think that is necessarily an expenditure that would have to be made to develop such a program. I think there is a lot of them already available.

If that were implemented, then I would suggest that it be allowed or offered as an option to those household members who are not exempt from the job search and work registration requirements, and if that household member chooses to enter a literacy program, then that member should be exempt from the job search requirements until that literacy education program is completed.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bicking appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HATCHER. Thank you, Ms. Bicking. I am going to have to interrupt you there. There is a vote and I barely have time to get over to make the vote. I would like to thank all of you. I will not have any questions at this time. This will terminate the hearing with the exception of without objection I want to leave the record open for members of the subcommittee to submit additional ques-

tions to any of the witnesses as well as the record will remain open to receive answers to those questions.

[Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

TESTIMONY OF

G. SCOTT DUNN, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICE, USDA

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,

CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION

MAY 17, 1989

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am Scott Dunn, Acting Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to discuss the issues related to food availability in rural America. The Department has a long standing commitment to the rural and farm community and to meeting the nutritional needs of all Americans. A primary mission of the Department is to assure that all Americans have sufficient, wholesome, and nutritious food available to them. Responsibility for carrying out this mission involves several USDA agencies. For example:

The Food and Nutrition Service administers the domestic food assistance programs which provide more than 20 billion dollars per year to low-income Americans to help meet their nutritional needs.

The Extension Service provides information and educational

programs throughout the country, including the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program that is targeted to low-income families; and the Human Nutrition Information Service conducts research to monitor the American diet and provides timely information about the dietary and nutritional status of Americans and the factors that affect that status.

The Food and Nutrition Service has long recognized that nutritional adequacy and the risk of malnutrition are not uniquely urban problems. Reaching needy rural Americans has challenged lawmakers and program officials alike.

For much of last year, members of the Committee and your staff worked to craft changes to the domestic feeding programs in order to improve benefit delivery. The result was the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988, P.L.100-435. Although it is too early to see the complete results of this legislation, we share your hope that implementation of these new provisions will further expedite the delivery of food assistance to rural recipients.

Today, I would like to present a status report on how well the food assistance programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service are doing in making benefits readily accessible to the

rural poor. FNS administers 13 different programs to deliver nutrition assistance to low-income Americans in all areas of the country. Needy families in every U.S. county have access to food stamps and school lunch. The Child Care Food Program, WIC, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are also available in rural areas.

Characteristics of Low-Income Rural Households

About 22% of the population of the United States is located in nonmetropolitan, or rural, areas. Approximately 18% of these rural households are poor (having income below the poverty line), while only 12% of nonrural households are poor.

There are significant differences between rural poor program participants and their urban counterparts.

We know, for instance, that rural poor families are much more likely than urban poor families to have earned income from some form of employment. This is true of the rural food stamp population as well. Rural poor food stamp households, as well as the rural poor population in general, are more likely to contain elderly members than their urban counterparts. Thus, rural

poverty presents its own unique characteristics that set it apart from poverty in urban and suburban settings.

Rural Participation in Food Assistance Programs

FNS programs, however, are flexible enough to reach and serve this population. These programs are serving the rural poor effectively. For instance:

School Lunch Program:

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is available to 95 percent of rural households with children. Among children in these households, across all income categories, nearly 80 percent receive a school lunch on a typical day. For urban children, the rate is 62 percent. Although we do not have specific information for rural, low-income children, we do know that participation in the free meal category--applicable to students in households with incomes below 130 percent of poverty--is considerably higher than the overall participation rate. While the average rate of participation for all students, both rural and urban, is 66 percent, 92 percent of children in the free category receive a school lunch on a typical day. This leads us to believe that most low-income children with the program available receive a free lunch.

Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP):

Fully half of all distribution sites for TEFAP are located in

nonmetropolitan areas. In 1986, 55% of all recipient households received benefits from these locations, indicating that the sites are appropriately distributed for access by the rural population.

WIC: Due to cost-containment initiatives underway by WIC State agencies, the Food and Nutrition Service estimates that the WIC Program will be available in almost every county within the continental United States by 1990. As a result, few, if any, rural areas will be left unserved by WIC.

Migrant farmworkers are an especially high-risk rural WIC target population. A number of regulatory provisions have been enacted to improve WIC's access to migrant women and their children. These include: a special funding set-aside of 9/10 of 1 percent of WIC appropriated funds to provide services to migrants; an expedited application processing time frame of 10 days or less for migrants; the issuance of Verification of Certification cards containing basic participant data to facilitate the automatic transfer of WIC services as migrants move from one location to another; the requirement that transferring migrant participants be placed on any existing local agency waiting lists ahead of all other applicants; and adoption of a standard definition of "migrant farmworker," congruent with that used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). In addition,

WIC and the DHHS Migrant Health Program have signed a cooperative agreement to help facilitate the access of available nutrition and health services to migrant families.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR): The FDPIR provides a monthly food package in lieu of food coupons to eligible low-income native American households living on or near reservations. This program represents a nutritional alternative to the Food Stamp Program for low-income households in rural areas where food stores are inconveniently located. This program is responsive to the unique needs of the rural poor and is currently operating on over 200 individual Indian reservations. Currently 137,000 households receive benefits through this program.

Food Stamp Program:

- Although only 22% of all households in the country were located in rural areas in 1986, 30% of food stamp households were rural. This reflects, in part, higher poverty rates in rural areas but also demonstrates the program's availability to those most in need.

- In 1986, the same proportion of eligible rural poor households received food stamps as eligible urban poor households,

indicating that the program is as accessible in rural as in urban areas.

- From 1979 to 1987, food stamp receipt among rural poor households has remained fairly constant with a slight increase in the past year, despite a decrease in the rural poverty rate.

Program Rules Make Benefits Readily Accessible

Not only does the Food Stamp Program reach equal proportions of rural and urban poor, but the program is also responsive to the unique needs of the rural poor. For example: Since the rural poor are considerably more likely to have earnings than the urban poor, food stamp rules targeted to low-income working Americans are especially helpful to those in rural areas:

- Recipients receive deductions for earned income and for child care (a major work-related expense) and vehicles used for work purposes are not counted as assets.

- The program does not count Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) payments as either income or resources. The EITC is a credit designed to assist the working poor.

The Food Stamp Program also contains provisions that benefit the elderly, who are more likely to live in rural than urban areas:

- Special provisions exist to make the application process easier: the elderly can authorize a representative to assist with the application; benefits can be mailed to those unable to pick them up in person; and the process for claiming medical deductions has been simplified.

- Households with elderly members are allowed to own up to $3,000 in resources instead of the usual limit of $2,000. The elderly are entitled to medical expense deductions and an uncapped shelter deduction, and are exempted from the gross income limit.

- Elderly individuals can qualify as food stamp households separate from other eligible household members.

Access in Remote Areas

Food Stamp Program regulations recognize that people in rural areas may experience special difficulties by providing optional alternatives to normal procedures. For example:

- Benefits can be mailed directly to households--eliminating at least one trip every month--in specified locations. Over 30 percent of all food stamp benefits are issued by mail.

- In applying for food stamps, State agencies are required to use telephone interviews instead of office interviews for people with difficulty getting to offices.

- State agencies permit rural families to apply for benefits in the county adjacent to the one in which they reside if that office is more accessible.

State agencies also assist people in rural areas with toll-free hotlines for information and complaints, extended office hours, outstationed workers, itinerant or satellite offices, and contacts with grassroot organizations to provide information.

Florida, which has a high migrant population at various times during the year, makes use of several procedures geared to migrants--satellite offices, telephone interviews, extended hours, multi-lingual workers, group orientation and referral services.

Another example of an innovation by a State agency is Kansas'

mobile employment and training van that spends two weeks in a rural site, reaching nearly 3,500 work registrants in 20 counties in FY 1988.

Farmers

The Hunger Prevention Act requires States to provide intensive training to eligibility workers on the certification of farming households to ensure accurate benefit calculations for this sector of the rural population. FNS developed a training package and distributed copies to all regional offices and State agencies in February.

Regulations will be published shortly to allow farm households the option to average their income for self-employment and farm-related expenses over 12 months to reduce the variability in their monthly resources. This averaging will maintain steady monthly benefit levels throughout the year.
Benefit calculations for self-employed recipients such as farmers exclude the costs of such items as stock, equipment and raw materials used to produce income.

Migrant Farmworkers

The Food Stamp Program has several provisions that should assist migrant farmworkers as well. Migrant farmworker households can qualify as destitute if they have few or no resources, thus

guaranteeing them food stamps within 5 days. States are required to offer extended office hours for applicants who can not come during daytime hours, provide bilingual certification workers, and supply assistance with applications as needed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that the rural poor have special needs that careful, well designed food assistance programs help to address. Recent legislative changes are now being implemented that will help further our mission making food assistance readily available to all of those who need it.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions that you and the Committee might have.

HUNGER IN RURAL AMERICA

Testimony of James T. Heimbach, Ph.D.
Acting Administrator
Human Nutrition Information Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

before the
Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations,
and Nutrition
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives

May 17, 1989

Mr. Chairman, I am James Heimbach, Acting Administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service (HNIS). I am pleased to be here today to participate in this hearing on hunger in rural America. I am accompanied by Dr. Robert Rizek, Director of the HNIS Nutrition Monitoring Division. My testimony today will cover two areas. First, I will discuss what the results of our surveys conducted in 1985 and 1986 indicate about the dietary status of the rural poor. Second, I will discuss what types of additional information will be available from future HNIS surveys that will address the issue of hunger in rural America.

SURVEY RESULTS

In 1985, HNIS initiated the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII). The survey was repeated in 1986. In both years the CSFII included women 19-50 years of age and their children 1-5 years of age. These groups were selected because previous surveys have shown that women and children in these age groups are more likely than individuals in other population groups to have diets low in certain nutrients.

The CSFII included two samples--a sample of all-income households and a sample of low-income households. The majority of the data presented here are from the combined low-income samples from 1985 and 1986. Low-income households are those having incomes before taxes for the previous year at or below 130 percent of the poverty guidelines. This income level was selected because nonelderly households at this level meet one of the criteria for participating in the Food Stamp Program. Tables are provided with this testimony that show households with incomes above 130 percent of the poverty guidelines use data from the all-income combined sample.

Since both the 1985 and 1986 Continuing Surveys were area probability samples, the total number of respondents, especially rural, is somewhat limited. We are confident, however, that these data are representative of the population groups to be discussed.

The urbanization categories presented here are based on the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce for the 1980 Census of Population. Metropolitan refers to a city which has a population of 50,000 or more and is the main city within an SMSA. Rural refers to any area not within an SMSA.

The CSFII data permit two types of comparisons of interest to this committee: (1) the food and nutrient intakes by low-income rural women and children compared with those of low-income metro women and children and (2) the food and nutrient intakes by low-income women and children who live in households that participated in the Food Stamp Program compared with intakes of nonparticipants. A summary of survey results is provided here. The tables in the attachments provide the detailed data. Food intakes are measured in two ways: the mean intake in grams and the percentages of individuals using a specific food group. In many cases a population group may have a higher mean intake of a food but a lower percentage of individuals using that food than another population group. In general, the food intakes that we cite a different are those in which both measures of food intake are in the same direction and appear substantial. The nutrient intakes provided here are expressed as percentages of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA).

(1) Rural versus Metro. Low-income rural women had food intakes that were generally similar to their metropolitan counterparts. Rural women had slightly higher intakes of vegetables, coffee, and tea and slightly

lower intakes of fruits, alcoholic beverages, and carbonated soft drinks than did metro women.

These fairly minor differences in food intakes by rural and metro women do not translate into any differences in food energy intake or intakes of those nutrients which are below the RDA. The mean nutrient intakes by women in both urbanization groups were above the RDA for 8 of 15 nutrients examined and below the RDA for food energy and 7 nutrients (vitamin B-6, calcium, magnesium, iron, vitamin E, folacin, and zinc). For the seven nutrients below the RDA, the mean RDA levels of the two groups were almost identical. I call to your attention that higher-income women had nutrient intakes that were below the RDA for the same nutrients as the lower-income women.

Rural children had mean intakes that were similar to or higher than those of metro children for total meat, poultry, fish; fluid milk; eggs; vegetables; fruit drinks; and soft drinks. They had lower mean intakes of grain products.

Lower-income rural children had intakes of food energy, protein, fat, and all vitamins and minerals that were similar to or higher than intakes by lower-income metro children. Average nutrient intakes by children in both urbanization groups were above the RDA for 13 of 15 nutrients examined. Intakes of iron and zinc were below the RDA for both rural and metro children. Intakes of iron and zinc were below the RDA for higher-income children also.

(2) Food Stamp participation. In general, low-income rural women had food intakes that were similar regardless of their participation (FSP) or nonparticipation (NFSP) in the Food Stamp Program. There were several exceptions. Participating women had a considerably higher

intake of fluid milk than nonparticipating women. They also had higher intakes of mixtures that were mostly grain, of coffee, fruit drinks and ades. and soft drinks and slightly lower intakes of fruits and tea.

Both participating and nonparticipating women had intakes of vitamin B-6, magnesium, iron, folacin, and zinc that were below 65 percent of the RDA. These RDA levels are slightly lower than those of higher income women, although as I mentioned above, higher income women also have low intakes of the same nutrients. Women participating in the Food Stamp Program had higher levels of calcium than did nonparticipating women, reflecting higher intakes of fluid milk by the participating women.

A comparison of rural women participating in the Food Stamp Program with metropolitan women who were also participating shows few differences in food and nutrient intakes. The rural women had higher intakes of milk, particularly skim milk, and slightly lower intakes of fruits than did metropolitan women. Again, both groups of women were below the RDA for the same nutrients. Rural women had higher levels of calcium.

Taking a look at the diets of children in rural areas, we find that children living in households that participated in the Food Stamp Program had higher intakes of total meat, poultry, fish; fluid milk; and vegetables; and lower intakes of fruits, fruit drinks and ades, and soft drinks than did nonparticipating children. The rural children had higher intakes of iron, probably reflecting their higher intakes of meat, poultry, and fish.

Comparing participating children in rural areas with participating children in metropolitan areas indicates that the rural children ate

more milk and vegetables and less grain products. The rural children had higher levels of iron and zinc--the two nutrients that are frequently short in children's diets.

To summarize what the data from the CSFII show about the diets of the rural poor, we conclude that the dietary status of low-income rural women and their children is as good as that of the urban poor and even somewhat better in the case of calcium for women and iron for children. The slightly lower intake of fruits by the rural poor is balanced by a slightly higher intake of vegetables. These differences are not cause for concern about the intake of vitamins A and C--nutrients that are available in substantial amounts from both fruits and vegetables. Both women and children in rural areas had intakes at or above the recommended levels.

FUTURE SURVEYS

The CSFII, initiated in 1985, is the first nationwide dietary intake survey designed to be conducted year-by-year in this country. Because this was a new survey, and because HNIS was in the midst of collecting data for the larger Nationwide Food Consumption Survey (NFCS), collection of data for the third year was postponed until 1989. This pause also provided us an opportunity to evaluate the first two years of the survey and to make appropriate changes in methodology.

The 1989 CSFII began last month. It will be conducted each year from 1989 through 1996, and each year will include both all-income and low-income samples. Unlike the 1985 and 1986 surveys which included only women and children, the 1989 CSFII will include data for all sex/age groups in the population. In subsequent years, the CSFII could include samples of specific population groups such as the rural poor or the elderly.

Survey results will be reported using a moving-average; an approach recommended by two committees of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences as a way of providing annual data while minimizing costs by maintaining a smaller sample size than would otherwise be possible. The first data from the 1989 CSFII will be available following the 1990 data collection. After that, we will be able--for the first time--to provide annual updates of our dietary status measures.

The CSFII survey has been designed with another new feature, the flexibility to accommodate modules from other agencies with concerns relative to nutrition monitoring. The first of these modules will be part of the 1989 survey. A cooperative effort among the Food and Drug Administration of DHHS, the Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA, and the Human Nutrition Information Service was established to plan a survey on consumer knowledge and attitudes on diet/health issues as a telephone followup to the main survey. This project represents the first time that a nationwide sample will be used to study the relationship between individuals' actual dietary intakes and their attitudes about dietary behavior.

By the end of this year we expect to have data available from the 1987-88 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey (NFCS). Like all HNIS surveys, the NFCS, which has been conducted about every 10 years, consists of two samples--an all-income sample and a low-income sample. The NFCS is larger than the CSFII, and includes, in addition to information on the food and nutrient intakes of individuals, a household food use component.

The household component of the survey includes the collection of information on the kinds and quantities of foods households used during

a 7-day period and the cost of those foods. Foods are reported in the form they entered the kitchen, such as fresh, frozen, canned, and cooked. Quantities are reported in common units of measure. For purchased foods, prices are obtained. Information is collected also for foods that are home-produced (those raised for home use) and for foods received as gift or in payment for work.

The household component of the NFCS provides cost information that makes possible a number of analyses pertaining to the rural poor. These include: food shopping practices; the quantity and money value of purchased foods, home-produced foods, and those that are gift or in payment for work; the allocation of the food dollar to various food groups; the nutrients received per dollar spent; and the price per pound paid for different food items. Additional data on demographics will be available, such as household size, tenancy of the dwelling, employment status, occupation, and educational level. Also, participation in food assistance programs, such as the Food Stamp Program; School Lunch Programs; The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program; and the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) are given.

This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I or Dr. Rizek would be happy to answer any questions you or the Subcommittee may have.

Attachment
HNIS testimony
5/17/89

GUIDE TO TABLES

Table Number	Table Title
	Food intakes: Mean per individual in a day and percentage of individuals using, rural and metropolitan, spring 1985 and 1986 (Tables 1.1-A1 to 1.6-B2)
	A. By income level
	B. By income level and Food Stamp Program participation
1.1-A1 to 1.1-B2	Meat, poultry, fish
1.2-A1 to 1.2-B2	Milk and milk products; eggs; legumes, nuts, seeds
1.3-A1 to 1.3-B2	Vegetables
1.4-A1 to 1.4-B2	Fruits
1.5-A1 to 1.5-B2	Grain products; fats and oils; sugars and sweets
1.6-A1 to 1.6-B2	Beverages
	Nutrient intakes: Mean per individual in a day, rural and metropolitan, spring 1985 and 1986 (Tables 2A and 2B)
2A	By income level
2B	By income level and Food Stamp Program participation
	Nutrient intakes as percentage of 1980 Recommended Dietary Allowances: Mean per individual in a day, rural and metropolitan, spring 1985 and 1986 (Tables 3A and 3B)
3A	By income level
3B	By income level and Food Stamp Program participation

Table 1.1-A1.--Meat, Poultry, Fish: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total		Beef		Pork		Lamb, Veal, Game		Organ Meats	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Grams---									
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	115	111	13	14	10	10	3	1	(*)	(*)
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	111	98	21	12	9	5	(*)	2	0	(*)
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	170	175	26	25	19	17	3	1	1	2
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	174	172	35	25	15	12	1	2	1	(*)

	Frankfurters, Sausages, Luncheon Meats		Poultry				Fish and Shellfish		Mixtures Mainly Meat, Poultry, Fish	
			Total		Chicken					
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Grams---									
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	19	18	16	15	14	14	3	5	49	45
>130% of Poverty.....	11	14	12	16	9	15	8	4	49	43
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	14	15	21	24	20	22	7	11	74	75
>130% of Poverty.....	10	12	14	23	12	20	14	13	80	82

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986

Table 1.1-A2.--Meat, Poultry, Fish: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total		Beef		Pork		Lamb, Veal, Game		Organ Meats	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Percent---									
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	84.1	88.8	18.1	20.5	22.0	22.3	2.5	0.9	1.4	0.7
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	91.6	84.8	29.3	18.1	19.0	12.7	.7	1.9	-	.3
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	89.8	87.6	21.9	22.2	25.8	23.2	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.2
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	89.0	87.9	28.1	23.2	24.4	18.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	.8

	Frankfurters, Sausages, Luncheon Meats		Poultry				Fish and Shellfish		Mixtures Mainly Meat, Poultry, Fish	
			Total		Chicken					
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Percent---									
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	38.6	32.0	20.9	20.4	20.0	18.8	5.5	6.8	29.7	31.2
>130% of Poverty.....	28.6	30.6	13.1	19.1	10.0	16.9	14.1	8.5	37.4	32.2
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	27.3	25.0	19.4	20.0	18.0	17.9	5.3	8.6	32.0	31.3
>130% of Poverty.....	21.9	22.6	15.6	20.7	12.8	17.6	11.9	11.5	38.2	36.7

- Data not available.
NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986

Table 1.1-A1.--Meat, Poultry, Fish: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total		Beef		Pork		Lamb, Veal, Game		Organ Meats		Frankfurters, Sausages, Luncheon Meats	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Grams---											
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP	230	680	121	111	12	13	9	9	3	(*)	1	1	22	19
NFSP	242	487	109	112	14	16	11	12	2	1	(*)	(*)	17	16
WOMEN:														
FSP	358	902	171	176	26	24	17	22	4	1	2	2	14	18
NFSP	405	926	169	174	25	26	21	13	2	1	(*)	1	15	13
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
	116	564	111	98	21	12	9	5	(*)	2	0	(*)	11	14
WOMEN:														
	370	1,681	174	172	35	25	15	12	1	2	1	(*)	10	12

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.1-B2.--Meat, Poultry, Fish: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total		Beef		Pork		Lamb, Veal, Game		Organ Meats		Frankfurters, Sausages, Luncheon Meats	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro		
	---Number---		----------Percent----------											
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP	230	680	84.6	87.8	15.2	18.6	18.5	20.6	3.2	0.4	1.8	0.8	41.1	35.1
NFSP	242	487	83.6	90.2	20.8	23.2	25.4	24.7	1.7	1.6	1.1	.6	36.2	27.7
WOMEN:														
FSP	358	902	87.7	86.5	22.5	19.7	21.5	26.8	3.2	.8	1.4	1.6	25.4	27.8
NFSP	405	926	91.7	88.8	21.3	24.7	29.5	19.6	1.9	1.1	.7	.9	29.0	22.3
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted]	116	564	91.6	84.8	29.3	18.1	19.0	12.7	.7	1.9	-	.3	28.6	30.6
WOMEN:														
[redacted]	370	1,681	89	88	28	23	24	18	1	1	1	1	22	23

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.1-B2.--Meat, Poultry, Fish: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Poultry				Fish and Shellfish		Mixtures Mainly Meat, Poultry, Fish	
	Total		Chicken					
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent							
<131% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
FSP	17.5	21.4	16.7	20.0	4.5	8.3	31.6	29.7
NFSP	24.2	19.1	23.1	17.0	6.4	4.7	27.8	33.2
WOMEN:								
FSP	18.5	20.3	18.1	18.3	4.5	8.0	29.3	26.7
NFSP	20.3	19.8	17.9	17.5	6.0	9.2	34.4	35.8
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
[redacted]	13.1	19.1	10.0	16.9	14.1	8.5	37.4	32.2
WOMEN:								
[redacted]	16	21	13	18	12	12	38	37

- Data not available.
NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.2-A1.--Milk and Milk Products; Eggs; Legumes, Nuts, Seeds: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Milk and Milk Products: Total Milk and Milk Products		Milk and Milk Products: Total Milk and Milk Products		Fluid Milk: Total		Fluid Milk: Whole		Fluid Milk: Lowfat/Skim	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		----Grams----		---Calcium Equivalents---		----------Grams----------					
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	425	399	469	445	371	358	277	274	93	81
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	369	437	406	494	306	377	154	196	152	180
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,629	207	199	253	244	169	160	106	105	62	54
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	216	220	274	282	149	154	57	58	92	95

	Milk and Milk Products: Yogurt		Milk and Milk Products: Cream and Milk Desserts		Milk and Milk Products: Cheese		Eggs		Legumes, Nuts, Seeds	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	----------Grams----------									
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	1	4	22	14	11	11	26	22	18	20
>130% of Poverty.....	6	9	22	20	19	13	18	16	23	23
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	3	2	16	13	12	12	24	23	17	23
>130% of Poverty.....	7	10	25	24	16	18	15	19	16	17

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."

SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.2-A2.--Milk and Milk Products; Eggs; Legumes, Nuts, Seeds: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Milk and Milk Products: Total Milk and Milk Products		Milk and Milk Products: Fluid Milk: Total		Milk and Milk Products: Fluid Milk: Whole		Milk and Milk Products: Fluid Milk: Lowfat/Skim	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		----------Percent----------							
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	91.8	92.3	86.5	85.8	69.9	66.5	22.8	21.0
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	98.0	96.9	90.1	90.8	47.1	45.5	43.5	48.4
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	67.2	68.7	50.3	52.1	34.0	35.1	16.6	16.2
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	76.1	80.9	48.2	54.1	21.1	24.1	27.6	32.0

Age of Individuals (Years)	Milk and Milk Products: Yogurt		Milk and Milk Products: Cream and Milk Desserts		Milk and Milk Products: Cheese		Eggs		Legumes, Nuts, Seeds	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	----------Percent----------									
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	1.0	2.2	30.3	15.4	23.9	25.4	36.7	36.0	27.5	29.3
>130% of Poverty.....	4.9	6.3	24.3	24.8	35.8	35.2	28.9	25.7	30.2	32.4
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	1.3	.9	15.1	12.3	23.9	23.8	31.9	29.0	17.9	18.6
>130% of Poverty.....	2.6	5.5	23.5	26.2	34.5	37.7	22.6	25.7	21.9	20.8

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 3.2.XI - Milk and Milk Products; Eggs; Legumes, Nuts, Seeds: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Milk and Milk Products: Total Milk and Milk Products		Milk and Milk Products: Total Milk and Milk Products		Milk and Milk Products: Fluid Milk: Total		Milk and Milk Products: Fluid Milk: Whole		Milk and Milk Products: Fluid Milk: Lowfat/Skim	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams		Calcium Equivalents		Grams					
<131% of Poverty												
CHILDREN												
FSP	230	850	617	414	518	467	416	375	300	299	116	76
NFSP	242	487	385	577	423	415	329	335	256	239	72	92
WOMEN												
FSP	158	902	217	183	257	225	181	149	104	109	76	39
NFSP	405	926	198	215	250	262	157	170	107	108	49	69
>130% of Poverty												
CHILDREN												
[redacted]	116	564	369	457	406	494	306	377	174	196	152	180
WOMEN												
[redacted]	370	1,661	216	220	274	282	149	154	57	58	92	95

Age of Individuals (Years)	Milk and Milk Products: Yogurt		Milk and Milk Products: Cream and Milk Desserts		Milk and Milk Products: Cheese		Eggs		Legumes, Nuts, Seeds	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams									
<131% of Poverty										
CHILDREN										
FSP	(*)	6	16	15	13	12	21	21	23	21
NFSP	2	6	25	13	5	10	31	22	15	19
WOMEN										
FSP	3	1	15	13	9	12	22	25	21	28
NFSP	5	5	17	12	14	13	26	21	15	18
>130% of Poverty										
CHILDREN										
[redacted]	6	9	22	20	19	13	18	16	23	23
WOMEN										
[redacted]	7	10	23	24	16	18	15	19	16	17

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."

Table 1.2-XG --Milk and Milk Products, Eggs, Legumes, Nuts, Seeds: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 85-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Milk and Milk Products							
			Total Milk and Milk Products		Fluid Milk					
					Total		Whole		Lowfat/Skim	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number	Number	Percent							
<130% of Poverty										
CHILDREN										
FSP	230	679.6	89.0	93.2	82.8	88.3	39.7	70.9	23.3	19.4
NFSP	242	487.4	94.3	91.1	90.0	82.3	65.8	60.4	22.2	23.2
WOMEN										
FSP	358	901.9	68.3	68.9	54.4	50.6	36.9	36.7	19.4	12.6
NFSP	605	524.3	66.1	72.5	46.8	53.7	32.1	33.5	14.1	19.6
>130% of Poverty										
CHILDREN										
[redacted]	116	563.7	98.0	96.9	90.1	90.8	47.1	43.3	43.3	48.6
WOMEN										
[redacted]	370	1,681	76	81	48	56	21	24	28	32

Age of Individuals (Years)	Milk and Milk Products						Eggs		Legumes, Nuts, Seeds	
	Yogurt		Cream and Milk Desserts		Cheese					
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent									
<130% of Poverty										
CHILDREN										
FSP	0.8	2.4	15.0	15.6	26.2	22.7	34.3	34.8	25.7	32.3
NFSP	1.2	2.8	23.6	15.1	21.8	29.1	38.8	34.8	19.3	24.8
WOMEN										
FSP	1.2	.6	14.4	11.1	28.4	21.9	30.8	31.1	17.3	20.1
NFSP	1.3	1.3	13.8	13.3	26.9	23.8	33.9	27.8	18.3	17.2
>130% of Poverty										
CHILDREN										
[redacted]	4.9	6.1	24.3	24.8	33.8	33.2	28.4	33.7	30.2	32.4
WOMEN										
[redacted]	3	3	23	26	34	38	23	26	22	31

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986 and 1986.

Table 1.3-A1.--Vegetables: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Vegetables and Fruits		Total Vegetables		White Potatoes	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams					
CHILDREN:								
<131% of Poverty	472	1,167	253	242	106	87	44	33
>130% of Poverty	116	564	301	345	98	97	38	30
WOMEN:								
<131% of Poverty	763	1,829	247	250	157	147	58	51
>130% of Poverty	370	1,681	312	327	196	183	60	48

	Tomatoes		Dark-Green Vegetables		Deep-Yellow Vegetables		Other Vegetables	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams							
CHILDREN:								
<131% of Poverty	11	11	5	4	5	2	40	36
>130% of Poverty	10	9	3	6	3	8	44	44
WOMEN:								
<131% of Poverty	21	19	9	9	5	5	65	64
>130% of Poverty	25	22	11	13	7	8	93	93

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.3-A2.--Vegetables: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Vegetables and Fruits		Total Vegetables		White Potatoes	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	----Number----		----------Percent----------					
CHILDREN:								
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	88.4	84.6	79.2	69.6	52.7	41.1
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	98.5	93.8	88.8	74.8	56.6	42.5
WOMEN:								
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	86.0	81.0	80.3	72.9	45.2	38.2
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	91.8	91.2	86.9	84.2	52.6	41.7

Age of Individuals (Years)	Tomatoes		Dark-Green Vegetables		Deep-Yellow Vegetables		Other Vegetables	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	----------Percent----------							
CHILDREN:								
<131% of Poverty.....	20.3	24.7	5.1	4.3	7.9	5.7	49.2	42.5
>130% of Poverty.....	29.6	24.2	3.8	10.5	8.4	11.1	62.4	50.1
WOMEN:								
<131% of Poverty.....	26.4	25.9	6.4	6.0	5.5	6.3	59.2	52.4
>130% of Poverty.....	33.1	31.6	6.8	11.3	12.3	11.6	69.7	69.1

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.3.A1 Vegetables: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
Project 85-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Vegetables and Fruits		Total Vegetables		White Potatoes	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams					
<133% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
FSP	230	480	248	249	128	91	58	56
NFSP	242	487	245	252	87	85	51	58
WOMEN								
FSP	359	552	247	254	158	174	74	53
NFSP	409	529	249	247	170	141	61	49
>133% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
[redacted]	159	504	251	247	94	97	58	60
WOMEN								
[redacted]	376	1,045	222	227	154	183	60	68

	Tomatoes		Dark Green Vegetables		Deep Yellow Vegetables		Other Vegetables	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams							
<133% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
FSP	13	10	8	6	3	2	46	39
NFSP	10	14	2	3	*	3	35	31
WOMEN								
FSP	22	19	11	10	4	4	66	67
NFSP	20	19	7	8	3	3	64	65
>133% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
[redacted]	15	9	5	6	3	3	44	44
WOMEN								
[redacted]	25	22	11	13	7	8	93	93

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals
Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986

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Table I.3-A2 -- Vegetables: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 84-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Vegetables and Fruits		Total Vegetables		White Potatoes	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Sample		Percent					
<130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
FSP	230	685	91.2	85.4	81.2	72.2	55.6	43.0
NFSP	242	487	85.7	83.4	77.4	68.0	50.0	38.4
WOMEN								
FSP	158	552	88.2	80.3	77.6	71.9	61.2	37.5
NFSP	405	926	87.6	81.7	82.7	73.5	48.7	38.5
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
[redacted]	116	566	96.5	93.8	88.8	74.9	56.4	42.5
WOMEN								
[redacted]	370	1,681	92	91	87	84	53	42

	Tomatoes		Dark-Green Vegetables		Deep-Yellow Vegetables		Other Vegetables	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent							
<130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
FSP	21.5	26.4	5.4	4.1	3.9	6.8	50.3	46.2
NFSP	19.2	22.5	4.9	4.5	11.7	6.8	48.1	37.6
WOMEN								
FSP	21.5	26.4	6.9	5.3	6.6	6.7	59.6	50.6
NFSP	30.6	25.6	6.3	6.7	6.6	7.8	59.0	54.6
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
[redacted]	29.6	26.2	3.8	10.3	8.6	11.1	62.6	50.1
WOMEN								
[redacted]	33	32	7	11	12	12	70	69

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table I-1-A1. Meat, Poultry, Fish: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project AA-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Poultry				Fish and Shellfish		Mixtures Mainly Meat Poultry Fish	
	Total		Chicken					
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams							
STATUS of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
FSP	12	16	12	14	2	5	43	41
NFSP	19	14	17	11	4	4	39	47
WOMEN								
FSP	21	25	20	22	5	13	78	67
NFSP	22	23	20	22	9	10	70	83
STATUS of Poverty								
CHILDREN								
[redacted]	12	16	9	15	4	4	49	41
WOMEN								
[redacted]	14	23	12	20	14	13	83	82

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Farm and Low Income, 1985 and 1986

Table 1.1-A2.--Meat, Poultry, Fish: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total		Beef		Pork		Lamb, Veal, Game		Organ Meats		Frankfurters, Sausages, Luncheon Meats	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		----------		----------		----------		----------		----------		----------	
							Percent							
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP	230	680	84.6	87.8	15.2	18.6	18.5	20.6	3.2	0.4	1.8	0.8	41.1	35.1
NFSP	242	487	83.6	90.2	20.8	23.2	25.4	24.7	1.7	1.6	1.1	.6	36.2	27.7
WOMEN:														
FSP	358	902	87.7	86.5	22.5	19.7	21.5	26.8	3.2	.8	1.4	1.6	25.4	27.8
NFSP	405	926	91.7	88.8	21.3	24.7	29.5	19.6	1.9	1.1	.7	.9	29.0	22.3
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted]	116	564	91.6	84.8	29.3	18.1	19.0	12.7	.7	1.9	-	.3	28.6	30.6
WOMEN:														
[redacted]	370	1,681	89	88	28	23	24	18	1	1	1	1	22	23

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.4-A1.--Fruits: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Fruits		Citrus Fruits and Juices				Dried Fruits	
					Total		Juices			
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams							
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty	472	1,167	147	155	56	59	49	49	(*)	1
>130% of Poverty	116	564	202	248	71	81	60	70	1	3
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty	763	1,829	90	102	50	56	43	48	(*)	(*)
>130% of Poverty	370	1,681	116	144	52	73	43	59	(*)	1

Age of Individuals (Years)	Other Fruits, Mixtures, Juices									
	Total		Apples		Bananas		Other Fruits and Mixtures Mainly Fruit		Noncitrus Juices and Nectars	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams									
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty	91	95	23	19	10	10	24	16	35	51
>130% of Poverty	130	164	24	29	14	13	28	35	65	87
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty	40	46	10	10	6	5	16	16	8	14
>130% of Poverty	63	70	16	17	11	12	23	30	14	12

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."

SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 168-A2.--Fruits: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Fruits		Citrus Fruits and Juices				Dried Fruits	
					Total		Juices			
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Percent---							
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	57.4	56.2	27.0	28.8	23.7	23.9	0.4	1.8
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	72.3	77.1	38.5	37.7	34.1	30.1	2.8	6.5
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	36.5	38.0	21.1	20.3	17.2	16.7	.8	1.0
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	48.7	53.6	24.9	31.6	19.5	24.6	1.5	1.9

	Other Fruits, Mixtures, Juices									
	Total		Apples		Bananas		Other Fruits and Mixtures Mainly Fruit		Noncitrus Juices and Nectars	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Percent---									
CHILDREN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	42.8	39.6	14.4	13.8	8.8	9.5	17.6	12.6	13.1	17.6
>130% of Poverty.....	57.4	62.9	23.9	24.1	9.9	12.7	22.2	24.1	25.9	29.9
WOMEN:										
<131% of Poverty.....	20.0	23.4	5.7	6.8	5.2	5.1	9.9	9.5	2.8	5.4
>130% of Poverty.....	33.8	36.9	10.8	11.8	10.0	11.5	15.5	17.8	4.9	5.0

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."

SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.4-B1.--Fruits: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Fruits		Citrus Fruits and Juices				Dried Fruits		Other Fruits, Mixtures, Juices			
					Total		Juices				Total		Apples	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams								Grams			
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP	230	680	139	158	57	60	54	50	0	1	82	97	19	19
NFSP	242	487	155	152	54	57	44	48	(*)	1	100	93	27	19
WOMEN:														
FSP	358	902	88	101	49	57	45	48	0	(*)	39	43	7	10
NFSP	405	926	92	104	50	55	42	48	1	1	41	48	13	10
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted]	116	564	202	248	71	81	60	70	1	3	130	164	24	29
WOMEN:														
[redacted]	370	1,681	116	144	52	73	43	59	(*)	1	63	70	16	17

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.4-A1.--Fruits: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Other Fruits, Mixtures, Juices					
	Bananas		Other Fruits and Mixtures Mainly Fruit		Noncitrus Juices and Nectars	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams					
<131% of Poverty						
CHILDREN:						
FSP	9	7	22	13	33	58
NFSP	11	14	26	20	36	41
WOMEN:						
FSP	5	5	19	14	10	15
NFSP	8	6	14	19	7	13
>130% of Poverty						
CHILDREN:						
[redacted]	14	13	28	35	65	87
WOMEN:						
[redacted]	11	12	23	30	14	12

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

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Table 1.4-A2.--Fruits: Percentage of Individuals in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Fruits		Citrus Fruits and Juices				Dried Fruits		Other Fruits, Mixtures, Juices			
					Total		Juices				Total		Apples	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Percent								Percent			
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP	230	680	57.9	55.0	25.6	29.0	24.3	24.4	-	1.4	43.7	36.8	13.0	12.3
NFSP	242	487	57.0	58.0	28.3	28.7	23.2	23.1	0.8	2.5	41.9	43.6	15.8	15.9
WOMEN:														
FSP	358	902	33.3	35.8	18.2	19.9	15.4	16.4	-	.5	19.3	21.2	4.8	6.2
NFSP	405	926	39.4	40.3	23.7	20.7	18.9	17.1	1.5	1.5	20.6	25.6	6.4	7.5
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted]	116	564	72.3	77.1	38.5	37.7	34.1	30.1	2.8	6.5	57.4	62.9	23.9	24.1
WOMEN:														
[redacted]	370	1,681	49	54	25	32	19	25	2	2	34	36	11	12

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.4-A2.--Fruits: Percentage of Individuals in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Other Fruits, Mixtures, Juices					
	Bananas		Other Fruits and Mixtures Mainly Fruit		Noncitrus Juices and Nectars	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent					
<131% of Poverty						
CHILDREN:						
FSP.....	6.5	6.4	19.6	9.1	11.0	18.3
NFSP.....	10.9	13.8	15.8	17.5	15.0	16.6
WOMEN:						
FSP.....	4.2	4.5	9.5	7.6	3.2	5.5
NFSP.....	6.0	5.7	10.3	11.3	2.5	5.4
>130% of Poverty						
CHILDREN:						
[redacted].....	9.9	12.7	22.2	24.1	25.9	29.9
WOMEN:						
[redacted].....	10	11	15	18	5	5

- Data not available.
NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.5-A1.--Grain Products; Fats and Oils; Sugars and Sweets: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Grain Products											
			Total Grain Products		Yeast Breads and Rolls		Other Baked Goods		Cereals and Pastas				Mixtures Mainly Grain	
									Total		Ready-To-Eat Cereals			
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams											
CHILDREN:														
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	193	226	38	37	30	38	50	63	18	17	75	88
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	189	192	29	36	43	46	38	52	19	20	79	58
WOMEN:														
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	202	207	43	41	45	39	47	53	6	8	66	73
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	198	207	42	43	57	53	26	38	7	9	73	73

Age of Individuals (Years)	Fats and Oils						Sugars and Sweets					
	Total Fats and Oils		Table Fats		Salad Dressings		Total Sugars and Sweets		Sugars		Candy	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams											
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	6	5	3	3	2	2	30	20	2	1	6	5
>130% of Poverty.....	7	6	5	3	2	2	46	31	3	1	10	7
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	12	10	5	3	6	6	19	15	5	4	4	4
>130% of Poverty.....	17	18	5	5	11	12	20	19	4	4	4	6

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986

Table 1.5-A2.--Grain Products; Fats and Oils; Sugars and Sweets: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Grain Products											
			Total Grain Products		Yeast Breads and Rolls		Other Baked Goods		Cereals and Pastas: Total		Cereals and Pastas: Ready-To-Eat Cereals		Mixtures Mainly Grain	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Percent---											
CHILDREN:														
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	98.3	98.7	72.6	69.2	57.8	62.6	65.2	68.3	50.9	49.3	36.7	37.1
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	99.1	99.7	74.8	73.8	68.3	74.8	60.4	68.1	49.6	53.4	40.5	35.3
WOMEN:														
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	93.3	91.0	66.2	62.0	52.3	46.8	29.0	35.2	13.6	15.0	25.1	26.2
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	93.1	94.5	67.1	68.2	59.3	59.8	27.2	32.1	17.1	17.7	28.1	29.2

Age of Individuals (Years)	Fats and Oils						Sugars and Sweets					
	Total Fats and Oils		Table Fats		Salad Dressings		Total Sugars and Sweets		Sugars		Candy	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Percent---											
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	50.3	45.6	39.7	37.0	14.8	13.4	54.5	46.8	29.2	17.6	12.5	13.2
>130% of Poverty.....	63.7	56.2	47.3	42.7	20.4	19.7	65.0	60.4	26.0	14.3	21.5	24.0
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	57.1	51.3	36.9	32.7	24.7	24.0	51.5	47.3	36.3	33.7	7.9	7.6
>130% of Poverty.....	66.6	68.1	40.5	42.3	37.2	38.8	55.6	54.1	37.3	36.3	10.7	14.1

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986

Table 1.5-B1.--Grain Products; Fats and Oils; Sugars and Sweets: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Grain Products											
			Total Grain Products		Yeast Breads and Rolls		Other Baked Goods		Cereals and Pastas				Mixtures Mainly Grain	
									Total		Ready-To-Eat Cereals			
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		----------Grams----------											
<131% of Poverty CHILDREN:														
FSP.....	230	680	202	223	43	38	26	40	47	67	19	19	86	79
NFSP.....	242	487	184	231	33	36	34	36	52	59	18	15	65	100
WOMEN:														
FSP.....	358	902	214	213	41	40	43	41	48	54	6	7	82	79
NFSP.....	405	926	191	201	45	43	47	38	47	53	6	8	53	68
>130% of Poverty CHILDREN:														
[redacted].....	116	564	189	192	29	36	43	46	38	52	19	20	79	58
WOMEN:														
[redacted].....	370	1,681	198	207	42	43	57	53	26	38	7	9	73	73

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.5-A1.--Grain Products; Fats and Oils; Sugars and Sweets: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Fats and Oils						Sugars and Sweets					
	Total Fats and Oils		Table Fats		Salad Dressings		Total Sugars and Sweets		Sugars		Candy	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams											
<131% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
FSP.....	6	5	4	3	2	2	30	24	3	1	3	5
NFSP.....	5	5	2	3	2	2	30	14	2	1	8	4
WOMEN:												
FSP.....	12	9	4	3	7	5	21	15	6	4	4	5
NFSP.....	12	11	5	4	6	6	18	15	4	4	4	2
>130% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
[redacted].....	7	6	5	3	2	2	46	31	3	1	10	7
WOMEN:												
[redacted].....	17	18	5	5	11	12	20	19	4	4	4	6

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.5-B2.--Grain Products; Fats and Oils; Sugars and Sweets: Percentage of Individuals Using, in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Grain Products											
			Total Grain Products		Yeast Breads and Rolls		Other Baked Goods		Cereals and Pastas				Mixtures Mainly Grain	
									Total		Ready-To-Eat Cereals			
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		----------Percent----------											
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP.....	230	680	98.7	98.4	79.5	68.4	51.5	61.8	65.5	69.5	52.0	51.4	32.4	38.1
NFSP.....	242	487	98.0	99.1	65.9	70.4	63.9	63.8	64.9	66.6	49.8	46.3	40.8	35.6
WOMEN:														
FSP.....	358	902	94.7	92.1	65.4	62.1	51.0	45.7	30.3	34.8	15.0	14.5	26.8	27.7
NFSP.....	405	926	92.2	89.9	66.9	62.0	53.4	47.9	28.0	35.6	12.5	15.5	23.5	24.8
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted].....	116	564	99.1	99.7	74.8	73.8	68.3	74.8	60.4	68.1	49.6	53.4	40.5	35.3
WOMEN:														
[redacted].....	370	1,681	93	94	67	68	59	60	27	32	17	18	28	29

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.5-B2.--Grain Products; Fats and Oils; Sugars and Sweets: Percentage of Individuals Using, in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Fats and Oils						Sugars and Sweets					
	Total Fats and Oils		Table Fats		Salad Dressings		Total Sugars and Sweets		Sugars		Candy	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent											
<131% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
FSP.....	53.3	43.5	44.0	34.3	15.8	12.8	48.7	49.7	22.0	18.7	8.7	14.4
NFSP.....	47.4	48.4	35.6	40.7	13.9	14.2	60.1	42.8	36.0	16.0	16.1	11.5
WOMEN:												
FSP.....	57.4	48.7	37.2	30.9	22.8	20.9	51.5	47.5	38.9	34.4	8.0	9.5
NFSP.....	56.7	53.9	36.7	34.4	26.4	27.0	51.6	47.1	34.0	33.0	7.7	5.8
>130% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
[redacted].....	63.7	56.2	47.3	42.7	20.4	19.7	65.0	60.4	26.0	14.3	21.5	24.0
WOMEN:												
[redacted].....	67	68	41	42	37	39	56	54	37	36	11	14

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.6-A1.--Beverages: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Beverages		Alcoholic Beverages				Nonalcoholic Beverages					
					Total		Beer and Ale		Total		Coffee		Tea	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Grams											
CHILDREN:														
<131% of Poverty	472	1,167	245	173	(*)	(*)	0	(*)	245	173	(*)	1	49	17
>130% of Poverty	116	564	202	162	0	0	0	0	202	162	(*)	(*)	47	21
WOMEN:														
<131% of Poverty	763	1,829	881	751	35	42	27	33	846	710	333	251	190	102
>130% of Poverty	370	1,681	1,055	938	45	89	30	56	1,009	849	433	336	196	166

Age of Individuals (Years)	Nonalcoholic Beverages											
	Fruit Drinks and Ades						Carbonated Soft Drinks					
	Total		Regular		Low-Calorie		Total		Regular		Low-Calorie	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams											
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty	118	91	102	86	16	5	77	64	72	61	5	4
>130% of Poverty	71	64	52	53	19	11	83	76	65	66	19	10
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty	67	79	54	72	13	7	257	278	208	231	49	46
>130% of Poverty	66	45	44	35	22	9	314	302	178	164	137	138

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low-Income Households, Spring 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.6-A2.--Beverages: Percentage of Individuals Using, Spring 1985 and Spring 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Beverages		Alcoholic Beverages				Nonalcoholic Beverages					
					Total		Beer and Ale		Total		Coffee		Tea	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Percent---											
CHILDREN:														
<131% of Poverty.....	472	1,167	65.7	54.1	0.3	0.1	.0	0.1	65.7	54.1	0.6	0.3	17.2	6.7
>130% of Poverty.....	116	564	61.9	52.5	.0	.0	.0	.0	61.9	52.5	.4	.7	16.8	8.7
WOMEN:														
<131% of Poverty.....	763	1,829	94.1	85.7	5.6	7.4	3.3	4.6	93.4	84.3	48.2	41.0	33.5	18.9
>130% of Poverty.....	370	1,681	94.6	92.2	9.7	18.3	3.8	7.3	94.6	90.8	50.5	53.3	38.5	30.3

Age of Individuals (Years)	Nonalcoholic Beverages											
	Fruit Drinks and Ades						Carbonated Soft Drinks					
	Total		Regular		Low-Calorie		Total		Regular		Low-Calorie	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Percent---											
CHILDREN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	37.5	31.4	32.9	30.0	4.7	1.9	28.4	25.6	26.0	23.5	2.4	2.4
>130% of Poverty.....	29.2	25.7	21.8	22.8	8.0	3.6	30.8	33.4	25.2	28.9	7.7	4.8
WOMEN:												
<131% of Poverty.....	17.7	18.2	15.2	17.3	2.6	1.1	48.6	48.6	40.1	40.3	9.3	9.3
>130% of Poverty.....	13.6	11.0	10.1	8.8	3.8	2.3	59.1	56.4	37.7	33.6	24.4	25.5

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, Core and Low-Income Households, Spring 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.6-B1.--Beverages: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Beverages		Alcoholic Beverages				Nonalcoholic Beverages					
					Total		Beer and Ale		Total		Coffee		Tea	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Grams---											
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP.....	230	680	229	171	0	0	0	0	229	171	0	(*)	55	11
NFSP.....	242	487	261	175	(*)	(*)	0	(*)	261	175	1	1	44	25
WOMEN:														
FSP.....	358	902	886	765	42	53	39	43	843	712	336	246	165	100
NFSP.....	405	926	877	738	28	31	18	24	849	708	330	256	212	104
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted].....	116	564	202	162	0	0	0	0	202	162	(*)	(*)	47	21
WOMEN:														
[redacted].....	370	1,681	1,055	938	45	89	30	56	1,009	849	433	336	196	166

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.6-A1.--Beverages: Mean Intakes per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Nonalcoholic Beverages											
	Fruit Drinks and Ades						Carbonated Soft Drinks					
	Total		Regular		Low-Calorie		Total		Regular		Low-Calorie	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams											
<131% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
FSP.....	105	102	90	96	15	5	68	58	67	54	2	4
NFSP.....	130	76	114	72	17	4	86	73	78	69	8	3
WOMEN:												
FSP.....	79	91	63	81	16	9	264	275	225	240	39	35
NFSP.....	57	68	45	64	11	4	251	280	193	223	58	58
>130% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
[redacted].....	71	64	52	53	19	11	83	76	65	66	19	10
WOMEN:												
[redacted].....	66	45	44	35	22	9	314	302	178	164	137	138

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals,Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 1.6-B2.--Beverages: Percentage of Individuals in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Total Beverages		Alcoholic Beverages				Nonalcoholic Beverages					
					Total		Beer and Ale		Total		Coffee		Tea	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Percent---											
<131% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
FSP.....	230	680	53.4	54.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.4	54.5	0.0	0.2	14.1	4.9
NFSP.....	242	487	77.5	53.6	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.1	77.5	53.6	1.1	.5	20.1	9.1
WOMEN:														
FSP.....	358	902	93.6	86.0	4.1	7.8	3.5	5.6	93.4	84.1	47.6	38.3	31.3	17.2
NFSP.....	405	926	94.5	85.4	6.9	7.1	3.1	3.7	93.3	84.5	48.7	43.6	35.5	20.5
>130% of Poverty														
CHILDREN:														
[redacted].....	116	564	61.9	52.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	61.9	52.5	.4	.7	16.8	8.7
WOMEN:														
[redacted].....	370	1,681	95	92	10	18	4	7	95	91	50	53	38	30

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1.6-A2.--Beverages: Percentage of Individuals in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Nonalcoholic Beverages											
	Fruit Drinks and Ades						Carbonated Soft Drinks					
	Total		Regular		Low-Calorie		Total		Regular		Low-Calorie	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent											
<131% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
FSP.....	30.0	32.5	26.5	31.3	3.7	1.8	20.9	24.1	20.6	22.2	0.4	2.3
NFSP.....	44.7	29.8	39.0	28.1	5.7	2.0	35.6	27.7	31.2	25.3	4.4	2.4
WOMEN:												
FSP.....	19.1	19.9	16.2	19.3	3.1	.8	46.2	47.7	38.7	41.2	7.7	7.1
NFSP.....	16.4	16.5	14.4	15.3	2.2	1.4	50.7	49.5	41.3	39.4	10.7	11.4
>130% of Poverty												
CHILDREN:												
[redacted].....	29.2	25.7	21.8	22.8	8.0	3.6	30.8	33.4	25.2	28.9	7.7	4.8
WOMEN:												
[redacted].....	14	11	10	9	4	2	59	56	38	34	24	26

NOTE: See "TABLE NOTES."
SOURCE: NFCS-Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals,Core and Low Income, 1985 and 1986.

Table 2A.--Nutrient Intakes: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Food Energy		Protein		Total Fat		Carbohydrate		Vitamin A		Ascorbic Acid		Thiamin	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Kilocalories		Grams						International Units		Milligrams			
CHILDREN:																
<131% of Poverty	472	1,167	1,477	1,422	57.9	55.9	61.9	58.5	176.7	171.9	4,828	3,814	84	76	1.20	1.17
>130% of Poverty	116	564	1,475	1,445	56.0	55.4	59.6	55.3	183.8	187.3	3,859	4,741	85	88	1.11	1.17
WOMEN:																
<131% of Poverty	763	1,829	1,558	1,545	62.5	62.8	64.8	62.0	181.4	182.4	4,738	4,523	69	75	1.15	1.12
>130% of Poverty	370	1,681	1,696	1,653	66.1	65.5	70.2	68.6	196.7	188.8	5,679	5,763	81	94	1.16	1.13

Table 2 A ---Nutrient Intakes: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986--continued

Age of Individuals (Years)	Riboflavin		Niacin		Vitamin B6		Vitamin B12		Calcium		Phosphorus		Magnesium		Iron	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Milligrams						Micrograms		Milligrams							
CHILDREN:																
<131% of Poverty	1.77	1.67	14.8	14.1	1.30	1.23	4.91	4.27	840	816	1,057	1,024	191	182	10.8	10.5
>130% of Poverty	1.63	1.71	14.1	14.2	1.29	1.29	4.06	4.07	787	866	1,029	1,062	190	204	10.3	10.8
WOMEN:																
<131% of Poverty	1.42	1.36	16.3	16.4	1.15	1.18	4.86	4.85	625	591	991	974	197	196	10.6	10.4
>130% of Poverty	1.49	1.44	17.6	17.3	1.27	1.29	5.55	4.59	679	681	1,061	1,058	225	230	11.3	11.0

Table 2.ZB.--Nutrient Intakes: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Race and Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Food Energy		Protein		Total Fat	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Number		Kilocalories		Grams			
<131% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
FSP	230	680	1,535	1,438	60.5	56.6	65.3	58.4
NFSP	242	487	1,422	1,400	55.4	55.0	58.8	58.5
WOMEN:								
FSP	358	902	1,541	1,580	62.8	64.3	62.4	64.3
NFSP	405	926	1,574	1,511	62.3	61.4	66.9	59.8
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
[redacted]	116	564	1,475	1,445	56.0	55.4	59.6	55.3
WOMEN:								
[redacted]	370	1,681	1,696	1,653	66.1	65.5	70.2	68.6

Table 2.2B.--Nutrient Intakes: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Race and Age of Individuals (Years)	Carbohydrate		Vitamin A		Ascorbic Acid		Thiamin	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Grams		International Units		Milligrams			
<131% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
FSP	181.2	175.4	4,779	3,781	90	77	1.29	1.25
NFSP	172.3	166.9	4,876	3,861	79	75	1.10	1.07
WOMEN:								
FSP	182.1	183.6	5,561	4,548	69	77	1.20	1.17
NFSP	180.8	181.2	4,011	4,501	69	73	1.11	1.07
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
[redacted]	183.8	187.3	3,859	4,741	85	88	1.11	1.17
WOMEN:								
[redacted]	196.7	188.8	5,679	5,763	81	94	1.16	1.13

Table 2.ZB.--Nutrient Intakes: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Race and Age of Individuals (Years)	Riboflavin		Niacin		Vitamin B6		Vitamin B12	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Milligrams						Micrograms	
<131% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
FSP	1.88	1.74	16.1	14.9	1.41	1.30	5.46	4.47
NFSP	1.67	1.56	13.6	12.9	1.20	1.13	4.38	3.99
WOMEN:								
FSP	1.54	1.38	16.6	16.7	1.18	1.22	5.86	5.33
NFSP	1.32	1.34	16.0	16.1	1.13	1.14	3.97	4.39
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
[redacted]	1.63	1.71	14.1	14.2	1.29	1.29	4.06	4.07
WOMEN:								
[redacted]	1.49	1.44	17.6	17.3	1.27	1.29	5.55	4.59

Table 2B.--Nutrient Intakes: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012-Continued

Race and Age of Individuals (Years)	Calcium		Phosphorus		Magnesium		Iron	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Milligrams							
<131% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
FSP	903	829	1,120	1,037	205	185	11.8	11.1
NFSP	779	799	996	1,007	177	179	9.8	9.6
WOMEN:								
FSP	653	580	1,001	996	198	198	11.1	10.7
NFSP	600	601	981	952	195	193	10.1	10.1
>130% of Poverty								
CHILDREN:								
[redacted]	787	866	1,029	1,062	190	204	10.3	10.8
WOMEN:								
[redacted]	679	681	1,061	1,058	225	230	11.3	11.0

Table 3A.---Nutrient Intakes as Percentage of 1980 Recommended Dietary Allowances: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986

Income Level and Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Food Energy		Protein		Vitamin A		Ascorbic Acid		Thiamin		Riboflavin		Niacin	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		----------		----------		----------		----------		----------		----------		----------	
								Percent								
CHILDREN:																
< 131% Poverty:..	472	1,167	102	99	227	220	219	174	187	169	155	152	204	192	152	144
> 130% Poverty:..	116	564	101	100	218	216	176	221	190	197	143	152	185	197	144	145
WOMEN:																
< 131% Poverty:..	763	1,829	77	75	139	138	116	110	113	121	112	107	115	109	122	122
> 130% Poverty:..	370	1,681	84	81	146	145	138	142	132	154	113	109	121	117	133	131

Table 3 A----Nutrient Intakes as Percentage of 1980 Recommended Dietary Allowances: Mean per Individual in a Day, Spring 1985 and 1986--continued

Income Level and Age of Individuals (Years)	Vitamin B6		Vitamin B12		Calcium		Phosphorus		Magnesium		Iron		Vitamin E		Folacin		Zinc	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent																	
CHILDREN:																		
< 131% Poverty:..	126	119	226	197	105	102	132	128	114	109	87	84	138	125	160	154	82	78
> 130% Poverty:..	123	126	184	186	98	108	129	133	113	122	83	87	119	95	158	158	83	82
WOMEN:																		
< 131% Poverty:..	57	57	141	151	76	71	121	117	64	63	59	58	82	84	46	46	58	57
> 130% Poverty:..	63	64	182	150	82	82	129	129	73	75	63	61	106	96	52	53	64	60

Table 3.7B.--Nutrient Intakes as Percentage of 1980 Recommended Dietary Allowances: Mean per Individual in a Day, by Income Level, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Income Level and Age of Individuals (Years)	Individuals		Food Energy		Protein		Vitamin A		Ascorbic Acid		Thiamin		Riboflavin		Niacin	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	---Number---		---Percent---													
<131% of Poverty																
CHILDREN:																
FSP	230	680	105	100	234	223	214	173	199	171	166	162	214	200	164	153
NFSP	242	487	99	97	220	216	225	177	175	166	145	139	194	180	140	132
WOMEN:																
FSP	358	902	76	77	140	141	137	111	113	123	117	112	125	111	125	125
NFSP	405	926	77	74	137	134	98	109	113	118	107	102	106	107	120	120
>130% of Poverty																
CHILDREN:																
[redacted]	116	564	101	100	218	216	176	221	190	197	143	152	185	197	144	145
WOMEN:																
[redacted]	370	1,681	84	81	146	145	138	142	132	154	113	109	121	117	133	131

Table 3/1B.--Nutrient Intakes as Percentage of 1980 Recommended Dietary Allowances: Mean per Individual in a Day, by Income Level, Spring 1985 and 1986
project 89-012

Income Level and Age of Individuals (Years)	Vitamin B6		Vitamin B12		Calcium		Phosphorus		Magnesium		Iron		Vitamin E		Folacin		Zinc	
	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro	Rural	Metro
	Percent																	
<131% of Poverty																		
CHILDREN:																		
FSP	136	126	250	206	113	104	140	130	121	111	97	88	156	142	174	167	88	79
NFSP	118	109	203	185	97	100	125	126	107	107	78	78	121	101	147	135	77	77
WOMEN:																		
FSP	58	60	155	160	80	70	123	120	65	64	62	59	85	93	49	46	60	58
NFSP	55	55	130	142	72	72	119	114	63	62	56	56	80	76	44	45	56	56
>130% of Poverty																		
CHILDREN:																		
[redacted]	123	126	184	186	98	108	129	133	113	122	83	87	119	95	158	158	83	82
WOMEN:																		
[redacted]	63	64	182	150	82	82	129	129	73	75	63	61	106	96	52	53	64	60

TABLE NOTES

GENERAL NOTES

(1) The numbers of individuals in the tables are weighted.

(2) Urbanization is based on Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) defined by the U.S. Department of Commerce for the 1980 Census of Population. For these tables, urbanization is designated as follows:

Rural: Nonmetropolitan areas

Metro: Central cities and suburban areas

(3) Data for income groups under 131% poverty are from wave 1 of the Low-Income samples for 1985 and 1986. Data for income groups over 130% poverty are from wave 1 of the All Incomes sample (Core) for 1985 and 1986.

(4) FSP and NFSP designate individuals in participant and nonparticipant households in the Food Stamp Program, respectively.

TABLES 1.1-1 to 1.1-2--MEAT, POULTRY, FISH

Mean intake--Quantities given are for foods as ingested; no inedible parts are included. Mean for each age group includes users and nonusers.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

(*)-- Value less than 0.5 but more than 0.

Total meat, poultry, fish--Includes beef, pork, lamb, veal, game, organ meats, frankfurters, sausages, luncheon meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, and mixtures having meat, poultry, or fish as a main ingredient. Unflavored gelatin and meat gravies are included in this total, but not in any of the following subgroups.

Beef--Includes beef steaks, roasts, ground beef, baby-food beef, corned beef, beef bacon, pastrami, oxtails, and shortribs. Excludes variety meats, such as liver and kidney, and processed beef, such as beef bologna and beef frankfurters. Excludes beef reported as part of a mixture.

Pork--Includes ham; bacon; salt pork; pigs' feet; pork cracklings; baby-food pork and ham; pork roll; and fresh, ground, cured, smoked, pickled, and dehydrated pork. Excludes variety meats and frankfurters, sausages, and luncheon meats. Excludes pork reported as part of a mixture.

Lamb, veal, game--Includes lamb, veal, goat, baby-food lamb and veal, rabbit, venison, and other game. Excludes variety meats. Excludes lamb, veal or game reported as part of a mixture.

Organ meats--Includes liver, heart, kidney, and other organ meats from beef, pork, lamb, veal, game, and poultry; also includes baby-food liver and heart.

Frankfurters, sausages, luncheon meats--Includes processed meats from beef, pork, ham, veal, chicken, and turkey and baby-food meat sticks and frankfurters. Excludes items reported as part of mixture.

Total poultry--Includes chicken, turkey, duck, goose, cornish game hen, quail, pheasant, other wildfowl, and baby-food chicken and turkey. Excludes giblets. Excludes poultry reported as part of a mixture.

Chicken--Includes chicken only. Excludes giblets.

Fish and shellfish--Includes finfish; shellfish, such as clams, crabs, lobster, oysters, scallops, and shrimp; and other seafood, such as frogs' legs, fish roe, squid, and turtle. Excludes fish and shellfish reported as part of a mixture.

Mixtures mainly meat, poultry, fish--Includes mixtures of meat, poultry, or fish with nonmeat items when reported as a single unit (for example, chicken cacciatore, beef potpie, tuna-noodle casserole, venison stew, liver dumplings, hash, shrimp salad, corn dog, salisbury steak frozen dinner, and chicken soup); baby-food meat and poultry mixtures; and meat, poultry, or fish sandwiches reported as a single item (for example, ham sandwich).

Percentage of individuals using--User is an individual reporting any food item in the specified group or subgroup.

TABLES 1.2-1 TO 1.2-2--MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS; EGGS; LEGUMES, NUTS, SEEDS

Mean intake--Quantities given are for foods as ingested; no inedible parts are included. Mean for each age group includes users and nonusers.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Calcium equivalent--Quantity of whole fluid milk to which dairy products (except butter) are equivalent in calcium content.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

Total milk and milk products--Quantities are expressed in grams and as calcium equivalents. Includes fluid milk, yogurt, cream, milk desserts, and cheese. Excludes butter. Whey, flavored milk drinks, meal replacements with milk, milk-based infant formulas, unreconstituted dry milk and powdered mixtures, and milk sauces and gravies are included in this total but not in any of the following subgroups.

Total fluid milk--Quantities are as reported. Includes whole, lowfat, skim, acidophilus, filled, evaporated, and condensed milk; buttermilk; goat milk; and reconstituted dry milk.

Whole milk--Quantities are as reported. Includes whole fluid cow's milk, low-sodium whole milk, whole fluid milk filled with vegetable oil, reconstituted whole dry milk, and whole fluid goat's milk.

Lowfat and skim milk--Quantities are as reported. Includes lowfat (1 and 2 percent) and skim fluid cow's milk, lowfat fluid milk filled with vegetable oil, and reconstituted lowfat and nonfat dry milk.

Yogurt--Quantities are as reported. Includes plain, flavored, and fruit-variety yogurt, breakfast yogurt, and frozen yogurt.

Cream and milk desserts--Quantities are as reported. Includes fluid and powdered cream, half-and-half, sour cream, ice cream, ice milk, milk sherbets, and desserts made with milk, such as custards, cornstarch pudding, and baby-food puddings. Excludes nondairy sweet cream and sour cream substitutes, which are included under fats and oils.

Cheese--Quantities are as reported. Includes natural hard and soft cheeses, processed cheeses and spreads, imitation cheeses, cottage cheese, cream cheese, and mixtures that are mainly cheese, such as cheese souffle, rarebit, and cheese sandwiches reported as a single item.

Eggs--Includes whole eggs, egg whites, egg yolks, baby-food egg yolks, egg substitutes, meringues, and mixtures that are mainly egg, such as omelets, egg salad, and egg sandwiches reported as a single item.

Legumes, nuts, seeds--Includes cooked dry beans, peas, and lentils; mixtures that are mainly legumes, such as baked beans, soups, and baby-food split peas; soybean-derived products, such as soy-based baby formulas and imitation milk; frozen meals with cooked dry beans or peas as the main course; meat substitutes that are mainly vegetable protein; nuts; peanut butter; coconut milk and cream; nut mixtures; seeds; and carob products.

Percentage of individuals using--User is an individual reporting any food item in the specified group or subgroup.

TABLES 1.3-1 TO 1.3-2--VEGETABLES

Mean intake--Quantities given are for foods as ingested; no inedible parts are included. Mean for each age group includes users and nonusers.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

Total vegetables and fruits--Includes white potatoes, tomatoes, dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables, other vegetables, citrus fruits and juices, dried fruits, and other fruits, mixtures, and juices.

Total vegetables--Includes white potatoes, tomatoes, dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables, and other vegetables and mixtures that are mainly vegetables.

White potatoes--Includes baked, boiled, mashed, fried, and canned potatoes; potato chips; and mixtures that are mainly potato, such as potato salad and potato soup. Excludes viandas (Puerto Rican starchy vegetables).

Tomatoes--Includes raw and cooked tomatoes; tomato juice and soup; catsup, chili sauce, and other tomato sauces; and mixtures such as tomato and corn, tomato and okra, and tomato sandwiches reported as a single item.

Dark-green vegetables--Includes raw and cooked dark-green leafy vegetables such as chard, collards, escarole, mustard and turnip greens, kale, and spinach; broccoli; mixtures that are mainly dark-green vegetables, such as spinach souffle and escarole soup; and baby-food spinach.

Deep-yellow vegetables--Includes raw and cooked deep-yellow or orange vegetables such as carrots, pumpkin, winter squash, and sweetpotatoes; mixtures that are mainly deep-yellow vegetables, such as peas and carrots and sweetpotato casserole; and baby-food carrots, squash, and sweetpotatoes.

Other vegetables--Includes cooked and raw vegetables other than white potatoes, tomatoes, dark-green and

deep-yellow vegetables, and their mixtures. Includes vegetable juices and soups; pickles, olives, and relishes; salads; viandas (Puerto Rican starchy vegetables); baby-food vegetables and baby-food vegetable mixtures with meat; and mixtures that are mainly vegetables.

Percentage of individuals using--User is an individual reporting any food item in the specified group or subgroup.

TABLES 1.4-1 TO 1.4-2--FRUITS

Mean intake--Quantities given are for foods as ingested; no inedible parts are included. Mean for each age group includes users and nonusers.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

(*)-- Value less than 0.5 but more than 0.

Total fruits--Includes citrus fruits and juices, dried fruits, and other fruits, mixtures that are mainly fruits, and juices.

Total citrus fruits and juices--Includes oranges and other citrus fruits, orange juice and other citrus juices, mixtures of citrus and other fruit juices, and baby-food citrus juices. Excludes citrus fruit drinks and ades such as lemonade, which are tabulated under beverages.

Citrus juices--Includes grapefruit, lemon, lime, orange, tangerine, and other citrus juices whether sweetened or unsweetened, fresh, frozen, canned, or bottled; mixtures such as grapefruit and orange juice, apricot-orange juice, and pineapple-grapefruit juice; and baby-food citrus juices.

Dried fruits--Includes dried apples, apricots, figs, prunes, raisins, and other dried fruits. Excludes mixtures and juices such as prune juice.

Total other fruits, mixtures, juices--Includes raw and cooked apples, bananas, berries, and other fruits except citrus and dried fruit; fruit salads and mixtures that are mainly fruit; noncitrus juices (including prune juice) and nectars; and baby-food noncitrus fruits, juices, and nectars, fruits with tapioca, and fruit desserts and puddings. Excludes fruit drinks and ades, which are tabulated under beverages.

Apples--Includes raw and cooked apples, applesauce, and baby-food applesauce. Excludes mixtures.

Bananas--Includes raw and cooked bananas. Excludes mixtures.

Other fruits and mixtures mainly fruit--Includes fruits other than citrus fruits, dried fruits, apples, and bananas; also includes baby-food noncitrus fruits and mixtures that are mainly fruits.

Noncitrus juices and nectars--Includes fruit juices and baby-food juices other than citrus. Excludes fruit drinks and ades, which are tabulated under beverages

Percentage of individuals using--User is an individual reporting any food item in the specified group or subgroup.

TABLES 1.5-1 TO 1.5-2--GRAIN PRODUCTS; FATS AND OILS; SUGARS AND SWEETS

Mean intake--Quantities given are for foods as ingested; no inedible parts are included. Mean for each age group includes users and nonusers.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

Total grain products--Includes yeast breads and rolls, other baked goods, cereals, pastas, and mixtures having a grain product as a main ingredient. Flour and biscuit mix are included under this total but not in any of the following subgroups.

Yeast breads and rolls--Includes yeast breads and rolls (excluding sweet rolls), English muffins, and bagels. Excludes yeast-type coffee cakes.

Other baked goods--Includes yeast-type sweet rolls and coffee cakes, biscuits, cornbread, tortillas, plain and fruit muffins, other quick breads, cakes, cookies, pies, pastries, doughnuts, crackers, salty snacks made from grain products, pancakes, waffles, and french toast.

Total cereals and pastas--Includes macaroni, noodles, spaghetti, grits, oatmeal, rice, other cooked cereal grains, ready-to-eat cereals, and uncooked cereal grains.

Ready-to-eat cereals--Includes unsweetened and sweetened ready-to-eat cereals, baby-food cereals, and mixtures of baby cereal and fruit or egg yolk.

Mixtures mainly grain--Includes mixtures (some with small amounts of meat and others without meat) such as pizza, enchiladas, spaghetti with sauce, baby-food macaroni and spaghetti, quiche, egg rolls, rice and pasta mixtures, frozen meals in which the main course is a grain product, and noodle and rice soups.

Total fats and oils--Includes table fats, cooking fats such as bacon grease, lard, and vegetable shortening; vegetable oils; salad dressings; nondairy sour cream and sweet cream substitutes; and hollandaise and other sauces that are mainly fat or oil.

Table fats--Includes butter, margarine, and imitation margarine.

Salad dressings--Includes regular and low-calorie salad dressings and mayonnaise.

Total sugars and sweets--Includes sugar, sugar substitutes, syrups, honey, molasses, icing, topping, sweet sauces, jelly, jam, marmalade, preserves, sweet pastes, fruit butters, gelatin desserts, ices, popsicles, candy (including dietetic), and chewing gum.

Sugars--Includes white, brown, maple, and raw sugar and sugar substitutes.

Candy--Includes candy (including dietetic sweets), chocolate chips, fruit leather, chewing gum, breath mints, and cough drops.

Percentage of individuals using--User is an individual reporting any food item in the specified group or subgroup.

TABLES 1.6-1 TO 1.6-2--BEVERAGES

Mean intake--Quantities given are for foods as ingested; no inedible parts are included. Mean for each age group includes users and nonusers.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

(*)-- Value less than 0.5 but more than 0.

Total beverages--Includes alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages. Excludes tap water and noncarbonated bottled water. Several nonalcoholic, nonfruit, noncarbonated beverages (for example, Puerto Rican oatmeal beverage) are included under this total but not in any of the following subgroups.

Total alcoholic beverages--Includes beer, ale, liqueurs, cocktails, other mixed drinks, wine, and distilled liquors.

Beer and ale--Includes beer, ale, and light ("lite") beer. Excludes near beer.

Total nonalcoholic beverages--Includes coffee, tea, fruit drinks and ades, soft drinks, and near beer.

Coffee--Includes ground and instant decaffeinated and regular coffee, liquid concentrate, coffee mixes, and coffee substitutes.

Tea--Includes tea from leaves; instant tea; instant tea with lemon, sugar, and/or artificial sweetener; frozen concentrate; and herb and other teas.

Total fruit drinks and ades--Includes regular and low-calorie fruit drinks, punches, and ades, including those made from powdered mix and frozen concentrate.

Regular fruit drinks and ades--Includes all fruit drinks, punches, and ades except low-calorie and low-sugar types. Excludes carbonated fruit drinks.

Low-calorie fruit drinks and ades--Includes low-calorie and low-sugar fruit drinks, punches, and ades.

Total carbonated soft drinks--Includes regular and diet carbonated soft drinks, such as colas, fruit-flavored and cream sodas, ginger ale, root beer, and carbonated soft drinks containing fruit juice; and near beer and other malt- and ale-type nonalcoholic beverages.

Regular carbonated soft drinks--Includes all carbonated soft drinks except unsweetened and sugar-free types. Also includes near beer and other malt- and ale-type nonalcoholic beverages.

Low-calorie carbonated soft drinks--Includes unsweetened and sugar-free carbonated soft drinks, seltzer water, and carbonated mineral water.

Percentage of individuals using--User is an individual reporting any food item in the specified group or subgroup.

TABLES 2--NUTRIENT INTAKES

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

Vitamin A--Represents total vitamin A activity expressed as retinol equivalents (RE) and as international units (IU).

Niacin--Values for niacin do not include niacin contributed by tryptophan, a niacin precursor.

Dietary fiber--Represents total dietary fiber. Includes both the insoluble fraction (neutral detergent fiber) and the soluble fraction (for example, gums and pectin).

Carotenes--Represents retinol equivalents (RE) of vitamin A activity provided by beta-carotene and other provitamin A carotenoids.

Vitamin E--Represents vitamin E activity from alpha-, beta-, and gamma-tocopherol expressed as alpha-tocopherol equivalents.

Folacin--Kepresents total folate activity.

Sodium--Includes naturally occurring sodium, sodium contributed by compounds used in food processing, and an assumed amount of sodium used in food preparation. Excludes sodium from salt added at the table.

TABLES 3--NUTRIENT INTAKES AS PERCENTAGE OF 1980 RECOMMENDED DIETARY ALLOWANCES

Recommended Dietary Allowances--Data in the tables are compared with the 1980 RDA. See appendix B.

In a day--Based on 24-hour dietary recall of day preceding interview.

Individuals--Excludes six breast-fed children in 1985 and eleven breast-fed children in 1986.

Vitamin A--Based on intakes expressed as international units (IU).

Niacin--Intakes of niacin do not include niacin contributed by tryptophan, a niacin precursor.

STATEMENT BY
MYRON D. JOHNSRUD
ADMINISTRATOR, EXTENSION SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE
HOUSE AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING,
CONSUMER RELATIONS AND NUTRITION
May 17, 1989

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and the Members of the Subcommittee to discuss activities of the Cooperative Extension System as they relate to hunger in rural America.

The Cooperative Extension System is a nationwide educational network that links research, science and technology to the needs of people where they live and work. Extension's purpose is practical education for Americans in dealing with issues critical to the Nation's future. One of the critical issues we are addressing is "hunger in America" and today I will address what we are currently doing, as well as some of the constraints that limit our ability to do more.

Extension education combines the expertise and resources of Federal, state and local governments. The partners in this unique system are: The Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture; Extension professionals at land-grant universities throughout the United States and its territories and Extension professionals in nearly all of the Nation's 3,150 counties. Thousands of paraprofessionals and nearly 3 million volunteers support this partnership and magnify its impact. Strong linkages with both public and private external groups are crucial to the Extension System's strength and vitality.

Our Secretary of Agriculture noted in his recent testimony on the Farm Bill that educational programs are an important aspect of the Department's mandate. We are fortunate to have a Secretary who understands the difference between just providing information and delivering educational programs. It is our mission in Extension education to identify critical national issues, such as nutrition, that may be ameliorated by delivering a targeted curriculum, specific to audience needs. The end result of our efforts cannot be measured by numbers of fact sheets, bulletins, news releases or meetings conducted. We are judged by whether our educational network is instrumental in improving skills and changing behavior of our clientele.

The Cooperative Extension System has been concerned about the nutritional status of the rural poor for a number of years. 1987 census data show that the metropolitan poverty rate to be 13.5 percent, while the nonmetropolitan rate was nearly 17 percent. While the data indicate the gap is most severe in the southern region where as many as 21.2 percent of nonmetropolitan residents may be living in poverty, areas of poverty exist in every region of the country.

We must recognize that there are some differences between the rural and urban poor. Rural poor are more likely than the urban poor to live in families headed by two parents, and to be employed, white and elderly. While more than one-third of our nutrition education staff resources serve the needs in rural areas, we must also consider the greater isolation and distances spanned in conducting these rural programs.

In all of our nutrition education programs for low income audiences, we collaborate with other public and private sector organizations. Across the country, states have formed partnerships with organizations such as Women, Infants and Children's Program (WIC), the Food Stamp Program, shelter programs, soup kitchens, Tribal Health Services on Indian Reservations and anti-hunger coalitions. We also rely heavily on paraprofessionals and volunteers for program delivery. Evaluations conducted under our Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) have convinced us that educational components can improve the effective utilization of other forms of assistance, such as food stamps and commodities. I will testify in more detail about the EFNEP program later in my remarks.

Rural poor pregnant women, often still in their teens, are an important at-risk audience we are currently targeting. They are at higher risk for malnutrition, low birth weight and infant mortality. We also know that these young women whether single or in two parent families have complex needs that go beyond nutrition education. Our extensive knowledge base in areas complementary to improving nutrition, diet and health gives us certain advantages in being able to structure holistic educational programs for low-income audiences.

We also recognize that the medical profession has scientific and technical limits in their current capacity to intervene with respect to infant mortality. 1985 figures show that more than 40,100 infants died before reaching their first birthday. Improved pre-natal care, including better diets, is a major avenue open to prevention and intervention.

Increasingly we are concerned about the nutritional status of elderly rural Americans. We know that there are people, often living alone, who do not have knowledge of or access to available programs. In addition, locally available program options may be much more limited than in urban areas.

Within our existing capacity, Extension is addressing the nutritional needs of rural poor in some of the following ways:

1. We have a national initiative focused on improving nutrition, diet and health. We are using our nationwide education network to develop educational programs to bring about changes in dietary habits and lifestyles specifically targeted toward improving low birth weights and lowering infant mortality rates. We are seeking out at-risk low income audiences, including pregnant women, children and the elderly.

As an example, an innovative program in West Virginia is training home volunteers to work with low-income rural pregnant women. These volunteers teach nutrition and take pregnant women for care. They link their work with that of WIC and the Food Stamp Program. These volunteers are all experienced mothers. They receive training from professional Extension nutrition educators, are supported with curriculum and materials and become part of a systematic networked approach to the problem, rather than working as an isolated individual volunteer.

Our experience shows that use of trained volunteers along with professional consultation, systematic curriculum and teaching materials and networked opportunities for evaluating lessons learned are essential for addressing this issue.

2. Another example focused on collaboration, training trainers and use of volunteers is the Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies program. This was made possible through grants from the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, the National Extension Homemakers Council, Inc., and the Extension Service. The curriculum for this educational program was developed by the University of Missouri and is getting underway in eight other states. It is being considered for use in 24 others. Arizona is conducting this program on Indian reservations and Kansas is using it with both rural and urban low-income audiences.

3. A number of our 1890 universities are also delivering effective nutrition education programs in the rural areas of the South. North Carolina A&T, as an example, uses trained paraprofessionals to teach pregnant adolescents to improve their diet and develop parenting and life skills necessary to give infants and children a better start in life.

4. Many states, such as Texas, are proposing comprehensive nutrition education initiatives to address the needs of most vulnerable groups--children, teens, young mothers and the elderly. Their proposal seeks to teach at-risk groups:

-Which foods are needed for a nutritious diet

-How to manage food resources, including home gardening and food preservation, particularly important to the rural poor with access to land

-How to use support provided by food assistance programs to improve nutritional well-being

We know that through nutrition education efforts, the dollars provided for food assistance can ultimately go to support better nutrition and health. In many cases, particularly when we are focusing on non-metropolitan America, our nutrition education programs have shown that we can make a definite difference.

At the Federal level, ES-USDA has developed a draft plan to encourage a nationwide nutrition education program targeted to the needs of the most vulnerable groups. This program is designed so that it could be implemented with the elderly, pregnant teens, health care providers, day care providers, low-income parents of young children and latch-key children. We visualize that such a program could be linked with other organizations at the national, state and local levels. It could establish an education center for child nutrition at Baylor, and provide targeted funding for curriculum development and outreach nationwide. As with many of our existing programs it would train trainers and make full use of paraprofessionals and volunteers. The same model could be applied to nutrition education for the elderly, using Tufts University as a potential site for an elderly nutrition education center.

5. Earlier I mentioned our 20 year-old Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. It is designed to assist low-income families to improve the total family diet and nutritional welfare. Historically, this program, built upon Extension paraprofessionals, has 48 percent of its clients in rural areas and 52 percent in urban areas. Over 60 percent of the EFNEP clientele are from minority groups. Sixty-five percent of the EFNEP enrollees receive Food Stamps, and 44 percent are participants in the WIC program.

While this program originally conducted nutrition education on a one-to-one basis, we have learned that we can effectively implement group programs to reach larger numbers of the population. Let me use Florida as an example. During fiscal year 1987-88, the total family members affected by the EFNEP program reached nearly 30,000. Florida intentionally targeted limited income families who were participating in government subsidized programs such as WIC, Food Stamps and various commodity food programs. They worked cooperatively with these Federal programs, adding the important educational component.

Youth is a very important audience within our EFNEP program. Many states have innovatively adapted lessons learned from our long history with 4-H and youth development to meet particular nutrition education needs among the at-risk population. For example, West Virginia has established nutrition-focused day camps for youth. These camps focus not just on improved diet but other critically important development needs as well. This program also works with the families of the young people in an attempt to create real and sustainable life changes.

Let me turn to another state as an example. Mississippi has the lowest per capita income in the country, but rural counties in Georgia have incomes lower than the Mississippi average. Through the EFNEP program, the Georgia Extension Service is able, with existing resources, to reach into nine of these rural counties. Impact studies show that these educational programs are improving nutritional status. However, many more in need of educational assistance are not being reached.

6. In addition to our national initiative on improving nutrition, diet and health and the EFNEP program, we are and will be targeting additional nutrition education resources to these priority concerns within our Family Economics and Well-Being and Youth at Risk initiatives. Within Youth at Risk, nutrition will be included along with other critical educational concerns required for physically and mentally healthy young people.

Mr. Chairman, I could continue enumerating examples of where our current educational programs are making a difference particularly in rural areas. However, I feel obligated to point out that Extension's educational mandate is broad. In addition to the targeted concern we have for the particular audiences we are discussing today for the types of education that will improve these situations, we are also charged with meeting needs of other audiences with significant nutrition education needs. We also provide education programs in important areas such as food safety, coronary heart disease, cancer, obesity, hypertension and osteoporosis.

While our national initiatives have helped us focus our agenda across the country, we do not have excess capacity within the Federal, state and local resources available to expand our efforts significantly. Our decentralized nationwide network helps us to better understand the magnitude of the issue we are addressing today. We also believe that we have the necessary knowledge base with respect to both what programs should be delivered to improve the situation and how these programs can be delivered more effectively and efficiently. As Administrator of the Extension Service, I receive regular feedback from throughout the Cooperative Extension System that convinces me that our staff across the country are painfully aware of the problem you are considering today. The number of sound proposals that cross my desk for improving our nutrition education outreach in a holistic manner is testimony to the desire of the Cooperative Extension System to do more. We are using our experience and knowledge base to implement promising model programs to more efficiently provide education. To expand our efforts significantly will require careful examination of where existing resources designed to address hunger in America are targeted and deciding upon the importance of education as an intervention strategy in this resource allocation.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I will be pleased to answer any questions you or members of your Subcommittee may have.

James G. Ledbetter, Ph.D. / Commissioner

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

878 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. / ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Testimony of Theresa F. Barr, Albany, Georgia
To The
House Committee on Agriculture,
Subcommittee for Domestic Marketing,
Consumer Relations and Nutrition

May 17, 1989

Hello, my name is Teesa Barr and I am the Corrective Action Coordinator for the Dougherty County Department of Family and Children Services in Albany, Georgia. I have worked with the Department for 13 years in the area of Food Stamps and AFDC serving as a caseworker and as a supervisor. In my present position, I assist the county in developing strategies to improve the way we provide benefits to clients. I feel the Food Stamp program is necessary in order to safeguard the health and well-being of our citizens. However, the rules governing the program have become so complex over the last ten years that they are difficult to implement and cause much frustration for our clients. The size of the caseload a caseworker has to work with also impacts on how efficiently they are able to get benefits out to clients.

In our particular office the average food stamp caseload is made up of 294 households which is a very high number. The high caseloads and complexity of regulations are impacting very negatively. Seventy-five percent (75%) of our food stamp caseworkers have less than two years experience.

I have met with workers throughout the State and have discussed the problems we and our clients have. A copy of the recommendations made by the food stamp caseworkers in Georgia is included with the copy of my testimony. I would like

to state ase examples using fictious names to show how these regulations impact the client.

1) Example for medical expenses - Mrs. Mary Smith, age 72, who receives Social Security comes into our office for her Food Stamp review. With her she brings a big envelope full of medical bills which she has incurred. She and an elderly sister are the only ones living in her household. She has outstanding medical bills of $250 and has just paid her prescription drug bill of $100. She has no record of how much Medicare or her insurance has paid on these bills as she is unable to keep good records and has no one else to help her. Based on our current regulations we would not be able to give Mrs. Smith the deduction for the medical bills as she is unable to provide us with the information to show how much medicare and insurance paid on these bills. To add insult to injury, she could not be allowed any deduction on the $100 she paid for her prescription drugs as the Food Stamp regulations state that no deduction can be given for a bill that has already been paid. As a result of our current Food Stamp regulations Mrs. Smith will not be allowed the very much needed medical deductions which in turn will mean that she will receive far less food coupons than she is entitled to receive.

I feel that if at least one out of pocket medical deduction can be verified by the client the household should be allowed a standard deduction that would cover all medical bills similar to the Standard Utility Allowance.

2) Actual Utility Verification Example. The Jones family applying for Food Stamps pay no heating or cooling cost so they are not entitled to the Standard Utility Allowance of $153. However, they receive a bill for electricity. In order for the Jones family to be allowed a deduction for the electric bill they must provide verification of past expenses. In order for this household to get the actual utility deduction they would have to get copies of the past monthly electric bills for

the twelve months prior to application plus any anticipated price increases from the utility company. The Jones live out in the county and in order to do this they would have to pay $5 to $10 to get someone to take them to the electric company to get this verification. They are not able to verify the actual utility cost so as a result are not allowed the deduction which will mean they will receive less food stamps than they were entitled to receive.

Note: The Food Stamp Manual states that the burden of verification is on the client.

I feel that we must come up with a procedure that is easier to implement such as a standard deduction for all households that incur utility cost regardless of heating and cooling costs.

3) Case Example on Student Status for Students living with Parent or Parents. Ms. Brown is a 19 year old college student who lives in the home with her mother and two sisters who receive AFDC. Ms. Brown is ineligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program as she does not meet the student work requirement of being employed 20 hours per week and is not on work study. As a result of the regulations the household would receive only $236 per month in Food Stamp coupons. However, if Ms. Brown had been eligible to be included in the Food Stamp household the coupons received would have been $300 which would have gone a long way in helping them maintain their monthly food budget.

I feel the work requirement regulations should be removed. I feel we should promote college attendance which will in turn promote self-sufficiency.

4) Example For Separate Household Status for 60 Year Old Who Is Disabled. Mrs. Jane Doe brings her elderly disabled mother to our office to apply for Food Stamps. Mrs. Doe's mother lives with her; however, she is on a special diet due to her poor health. Mrs. Doe states in the interview that her mother is unable to purchase and prepare her meals due to her health condition. Mrs. Doe is able to provide her mother a place to live but can't afford to buy her the food needed for her special diet. Mrs. Doe is married and has two school age children. Mrs. Doe and her husband both work but just can support their family. Based on our current Food Stamp regulations the only way that Mrs. Doe's mother could be eligible for food stamps is for the total income of the family to be considered and it would not be able to exceed 165% of the poverty line for the household size. In this particular case the Doe family's income is over this amount so Mrs. Doe's mother will not be eligible to receive the much needed food stamps, which will place a large financial burden on this household.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations so the Food Stamp program will better meet the needs of clients we currently serve and make it more accessible to those we should be reaching.

James G. Leathers, Ph.D. Commissioner

878 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. / ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Recommendations for Food Stamp Program Simplification
from the Food Stamp Caseworkers
In The State of Georgia
To The
House Committee on Agriculture,
Subcommittee for Domestic Marketing,
Consumer Relations and Nutrition

May 17, 1989

For our elderly and disabled population about whom we are most concerned, we recommend:

1. Eliminate the $35 minimum for medical expenses and establish a set medical deduction for clients who can verify an ongoing out of pocket expense. The process for determining actual medical costs for clients with high medical expenses must be simplified.
2. Cease penalizing our elderly and disabled clients for Social Security/SSI increases. Every time these vulnerable people receive a cost of living raise, we reduce their food stamps. Many elderly are eligible but not currently participating because the value of stamps received does not offset the time, expense, trouble and loss of dignity required to qualify.
3. Allow elderly/disabled clients to receive food stamps regardless of others in the home. Many of these people are on restrictive diets and need special foods.

For the remaining food stamp population, we make the following recommendations:

1. Eliminate the work requirement for students participating in the program. Everything possible should be done to encourage our young people to stay in school. Self-sufficiency for clients should be our primary goal. Also all student government loans should be exempt as income, remembering that the loan must

be repaid at some future date by the recipient.

2. Impose work sanctions until the client has met the work requirement. The current sanction process is very complicated and error prone.
3. Eliminate work registration requirements for rural counties where little likelihood of employment exists. Current procedure is a waste of time and paper for caseworkers and clients alike.
4. Simplify the verification process for actual utility costs. Many clients in rural Georgia have no heating or cooling costs and therefore are not eligible to receive the standard utility allowance. The current process for verification of actual utilities, which includes obtaining projected increases from utility companies, is cumbersome for clients and highly error prone for caseworkers.
5. Rethink proration of benefits for the first month. Households applying for the the first time are in a crisis and need more benefits. Some may be eligible but receive no benefits because they apply late in the month or receive so few coupons they have to reply on food banks or local charities for supplement.
6. Reevaluate the way we provide benefits. Most families are out of food by the third week in the month. Even though caseworkers explain that food coupons are to supplement income, our clients do not have enough to feed their families for the entire month due to high utility and rent costs which are usually due the first of the month.

7. Regulations for AFDC and Food Stamp programs need to be consistent. Guidelines for determining the value of vehicles, resource limits, work deductions and work requirements should be uniform in both programs.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations so the food stamp program will better meet the needs of clients we currently serve and make it more accessible to those we should be reaching.

James G. Ledbetter, Ph.D./Commissioner

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

878 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. / ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Testimony of Charlie Mae Dean, Fort Valley, Georgia
To The
House Committee on Agriculture,
Subcommittee for Domestic Marketing,
Consumer Relations and Nutrition

May 17, 1989

My name is Charlie Mae Dean, I live at 109 Troutman Avenue, apartment 1, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030. I was asked to come and speak about the food stamp program and what it has done to help the poor in Fort Valley, Georgia.

I can testify that the food stamp program has helped my family. Food stamps let me buy good nutritious meals for my family. It helps a lot. It helps me prepare three balanced meals for my family. I can buy milk, meats and vegetables with food stamps and thus give my family a good nutritious diet. The food stamp program has helped a lot of low-income people in Fort Valley that could not make it without food stamps. But like everything else, it has its disadvantages too.

You cannot buy non-food items like soap, detergent and tissue paper-other things that you need for the home. Low-income people that live out in the rural areas do not apply for food stamps because they can't read or write and do not know how to fill out the application.

Some don't have a way to get to the office to apply because they don't have a car or the money to pay someone to bring them to the welfare office.

There are many counties in Georgia that mail food stamps to their clients. In Fort Valley, we have to go to the courthouse to pick up our stamps. This makes it hard on people who don't live in the city. They have to wait until someone can bring

them to town to get their stamps. It is really hard on our elderly who have to climb the courthouse steps to pick up their food stamps.

Some people have also told me that because they live out of town and have no car, they have to wait until someone can take them to the grocery store. One lady told me that it takes 4 or 5 days sometimes before she can use her stamps.

My food stamps last my family about 3 weeks. Because of family size, some families run out after two weeks. We try to make them last as long as possible.

I hope this information can help keep the food stamp program.

Thank you very much for asking me to come.

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE

DOMESTIC MARKETING, CONSUMER RELATIONS, AND NUTRITION

HUNGER IN RURAL AMERICA

MOUNTAINEER FOOD BANK
GASSAWAY, WEST VIRGINIA

REPRESENTED BY:

ELZA WILSON, PRESIDENT
CARLA KNICELEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

416 river street
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May 17, 1989

The food banking concept was born and named Second Harvest in Phoenix, Arizona by John van Hengel in 1965. Second Harvest today is a national network committed to feeding the hungry. Through this network we collect surplus foods and other products from national companies--manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers. We sort, store and distribute these products along with soliciting local contributions.

Members of the Anti-Hunger Coalition working in local food pantries found they did not have enough food to meet the need. In the spring of 1981 Mountaineer Food Bank opened its warehouse in Gassaway, West Virginia and yet today is the only certified food bank in the state. Gassaway was chosen because it is the geographical center of the state.

We are a non-profit organization that stores and distributes donated products to approximately 175 community food pantries, shelters, churches and soup kitchens. An affiliate food bank is located in Huntington, West Virginia (Huntington Area Food Bank); it serves eight conuties in southwestern West Virginia. A satellite distribution organization, located in Wyoming County at Coal Mountain (Southern West Virginia Evangelical Association), serves six counties in southern West Virginia.

Through the Mountaineer Food Bank's extensive network, over 16.5 million pounds of food and surplus products have been collected and distributed. We do not receive state or federal support dollars. To defray

expenses of staff salaries, warehouse space, utilities and transportation, local agencies pay a nominal fee of 12 cents per pound for product. Grants and donations are sought to supplement the Bank's continuing need for special programs and equipment.

We first began truck distribution in 1984 with one monthly route and a leased truck which served 30 agencies. In 1985 we increased the number of routes to 3 per month hauling a total of 338,703 pounds of food and surplus product. Toward the latter part of 1986 The Nabisco Company donated a truck to the Food Bank. We soon realized how truck distribution helped the agencies deal with their transportation problems and how dependent they had become upon this service. Consequently, in October of 1987 we kicked off a statewide campaign, "Roll Away Hunger," to raise money to buy a better and more dependable truck. We purchased a used refrigerated truck through State Suplus Properties in December of 1987. We now serve 142 agencies at 17 distribution sites throughout the state. This represents 88% of the total number of agencies served by MFB.

In 1987, we covered 5,470 miles and distributed 524,665 pounds of product. By contrast, in 1988 we have traveled 20,947 miles, and the volume of product distributed has grown to 934,053 pounds, an increase of 56%. Not surprisingly, however, the cost of operating and maintaining our truck has increased 56% also. The combined cost of operation and maintenance rose from $5,099.07 in 1987 to $9,086.37 in 1988. Since we have increased the number of routes making it necessary to employ a full-time truck driver rather than part-time, the cost of wages and benefits have risen also.

Furthermore, the cost of shipping product from the out of state donors to the Food Bank has shown a dramatic increase--62%. This "imported" product represents over 74% of our total distribution because there is such a lack of resources within our own state. Although our 1988 budget allocated $25,000. for out-of-state transportation, our actual expenditures were nearly $35,000.

If the above described trends continue, we believe by the end of 1989 we will be forced to cut back deliveries or discontinue the trucking distribution all togehter. Of course, the various member agencies charge nothing to the recipients of product; most of them are religious and civic organizations which depend primarily on donations, contributions, and fund raisers for support. As the poverty level in West Virginia remains among the highest in the nation, additional expenses such as transportation to pick up product from the Food Bank warehouse would cause considerable hardship to many of our agencies. Over the past two years agencies have informed us that they are unable to meet the needs of all families who receive only disability benefits, are on a fixed income, or simply underemployed. Neither their food stamps or their food dollars are adequate to provide a month's supply of food, and because of a shortage of funds the pantries are no longer equipped to assist them. These same agencies are also the primary food source for many families in extreme emergencies such as loss of home to fire of flood.

In addition to expanding the delivery route system, we have initiated two other cost-saving programs:

(1) Maintenance of an "800" number for member agencies which permits them to call in and hear an updated recording of the daily inventory. This cuts down on their telephone expense and allows them to plan their order more effectively. The line is funded by a Nabisco Award and a grant from the Governor's Office of Economic and Community Development.

(2) Staff expansion to include Resource Developers at either end of the state. Hopefully, this will increase the amount of in-state donations, therefore reducing the cost of long distance transportation.

(3) The USDA commodity products are also filtered through the Food Bank. The West Virginia Department of Human Services has mass distributions on quarterly basis. The Food Bank supplies the agencies with the USDA commodities the other 8 months to assist the state with distribution, to help the agencies have more of a variety of product, and to insure that the recipients have a continual flow of food on a monthly basis.

The battle against hunger is a daily part of our lives because each day we go to the battlefield and face the enemy. Each day a fight is won, if only one person young, old, infant, or child is fed.

Barbara Bush
Honorary Chairperson

Second Harvest®
NATIONAL FOOD BANK NETWORK
"A Decade of Feeding America's Hungry"

10th Anniversary
1979 1989

Testimony of

Chris Rebstock

Eastern Region Manager

Second Harvest

on

Hunger in Rural America

before

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Agriculture

Sub-Committee

on

Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition

May 17, 1989

EASTERN REGION OFFICE 4 EAST BIDDLE STREET BALTIMORE, MD 21202 (301) 539-4944 (301) 385-1729 FAX

I want to thank you for this opportunity to address the sub-committee on the difficulties faced by those organizations attempting to serve our hungry neighbors in rural areas of our country. Inasmuch as you have heard or will hear from others more qualified to discuss the extent of rural poverty, I will confine my remarks to the issue of logistics as it relates to the provision of services.

As direct service provides, we recognize, and hope that you recognize, that it is not in our mission to identify and address the root causes of hunger. We support such programs as the Food Stamp Program, WIC, and other tested and true mean to provide assistance to those who need. Indeed, foodbanking is not the answer, but only a part of it.

I am the Eastern Region Manager for Second Harvest, the National Food Bank Network. As used throughout my testimony, the term "food bank" is defined as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation which plays essentially a wholesaling role in the delivery of donated inventory from donors to direct-service agencies which assist individuals. This differs from the sometimes more common usage of the term as a food distribution site serving the public directly; this type of program I will refer to as a pantry or soup kitchen. To further distinguish between these terms, a pantry prepares and distributes boxes or bags of products to be taken home and used by the client; a soup kitchen prepares and serves meals on site.

I offer my comments from the perspective of my current position with Second Harvest as well as from my previous experience as a food bank Board member and Executive Director in Pittsburgh PA.

Second Harvest's role in the food banking community is multi-faceted. Probably our most important function is to develop and maintain positive relationships with all levels of the food industry to generate donations of product to the network. These donations primarily consist of usable, but unmarketable products such as short coded product, mis-labels, short fills, surplus test product, etc. In 1988, the Second Harvest Network distributed more than 411 million pounds of such product - valued at more than $700 million - to over 38,000 charitable organizations through 200 member food banks.

Other ways in which we serve the Network are: standards development and compliance monitoring, training and technical assistance, fund development, and public relations services.

Translating these services to cost effective, practical operations in the rural areas of the country is not easy. While there are viable, effective programs operating in some areas, the message which has been consistently received throughout Second Harvest's history is that service delivery in rural communities is logistically and economically difficult.

There are several serious impediments to such service delivery. These include transportation, agency identification and development, and lack of resources. These impediments pose several resulting dangers, such as food safety, financial instability, improper use of product, and most importantly, insecurity and continued suffering for the ultimate client in need.

Transportation is a problem at several levels. First, the food banks are generally responsible for picking up donations at the donor's dock. While most food banks own and operate their own trucks, these are usually smaller vehicles used for local hauling only. Those larger loads which are traveling over-the-road are normally transported by common carrier at the food bank's expense. It is not unusual, therefore, for a food bank in a rural area to have a transportation budget of anywhere from $75,000 - $100,00 per year; and this often is not enough. Most food banks are heavily reliant on donated transportation services. While such services are available, they are, in fact, very costly in terms of staff time and effort to coordinate them.

The food banks, however, are in better shape than their member agencies in this regard. A food bank service area may be anywhere from 5,000 to 25,000 square miles. Obviously, this means that those charities which use the food bank as a resource may have considerable distances to travel in order to pick up their orders. Because the member charities are usually church

groups and civic organizations dependent on volunteers with their own vehicles , the distances involved pose a significant barrier to obtaining service.

Most rural food banks have responded to this problem by establishing delivery routes within their service areas. Typically, the food bank would pool the orders of several agencies in a geographical area and send their own truck to a designated off-loading spot. The agencies involved will meet the food bank's truck and take their orders from that spot back to their sites. Even with this arrangement, however, it is not uncommon for the agencies to have to travel 30 - 50 miles one way.

Such a "solution", of course, is expensive. A refrigerated 22' foot truck which can carry 10 pallets of product weighing approximately 25,000# pounds costs in excess of $45,000. The operating costs, including driver, maintenance, fuel, insurance, etc. are considerable as well.

Finally, the client who ultimately receives this product is often faced with transportation difficulties. By definition, rural areas require the travel of significant distances with little or no public transportation. Logically, those who are most in need are least likely to have access to the transportation which would allow them to avail themselves of services.

The most significant danger associated with inadequate transportation systems is food safety. As trends in food industry packaging and preparation processes turn more and more heavily toward refrigerated and frozen products, so too, do the types of donations received by the food banks. The obvious concerns related to the maintenance of proper temperature control and the potential for the development of inadequate control are significant.

A second problem is that of agency identification and outreach. Communications and development are difficult in rural areas and require a great deal of time and effort. From the food bank's perspective, it is quite a task to identify potentially eligible agencies in the expanses of its service area and to work with those agencies to develop and ensure compliance with acceptable recordkeeping, food storage, and client qualifying standards. Again, this process is very costly in terms of finances and time.

Because there are so few existing agencies, the food banks must invest a great deal of effort in actually identifying an eligible entity and helping them to set up a program. Even when successful, the follow up efforts are quite demanding, as is the community outreach to make potential clients aware of the new program's existence.

The third major problem relates to lack of resources. Both transportation and agency outreach have been referenced as

costly, but essential, components of a food bank program. While food banks generally charge a handling fee for their services which usually does not provide more than 60% of their operating revenue (based on 1986 figures). The balance of their funding typically comes from corporate and foundation grants, and a small percentage from public contributions and government grants.

Unfortunately, rural food banks lack access to both product and financial resources at the local level. As there are few manufacturing plants or distribution centers located within the service areas of rural food banks, they are highly dependent on Second Harvest and their sister food banks for inventory. Of course, this adds to the trucking expense.

Likewise, there are few large financial resources available. Those businesses which are located in rural areas are typically smaller employers with limited charitable capability. While they may be generous in funding services to their communities, such grants are small in relation to the need.

In order to remain viable and provide <u>some</u> service, most rural food banks are prevented from extending their reach to the neediest segments of their service areas by economics and logistics. Again, the result is that some of those most in need are least able to receive it.

On their behalf, I urge the Sub-committee to work with its resources and with those in the field to help construct a more effective, more comprehensive program of service delivery.

Again, thank you for giving this issue your attention. Be assured that Second Harvest shares your interest and stands ready to work with you and others to address this matter as you continue your efforts.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT GREENSTEIN
DIRECTOR, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES
before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING, CONSUMER RELATIONS AND NUTRITION
of the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

May 17, 1989

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today. I am Robert Greenstein, director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities here in Washington, D.C. The Center is a non-profit organization that conducts research and analysis on a range of public policy issues affecting low income families and individuals and that has an emphasis on issues relating to hunger, poverty, and domestic food assistance programs. The Center's work is funded primarily by foundations.

Prior to starting the Center, I served in USDA as Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service in 1979 and 1980 and as Special Assistant to Secretary Bergland for food and nutrition issues in 1977 and 1978.

I would like to start by commending the Chairman and ranking member for making the first Subcommittee hearing of the 101st Congress a hearing on rural hunger. During the years I was at USDA, Secretary Bergland, a former member of this Committee, consistently instructed us that one of the key tests of our management of the food assistance programs was the performance of the programs in rural America. Early on, he directed us to find ways to bring participation rates in rural areas more in line with those in urban areas.

Currently, at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, we are in the midst of a major research project on rural poverty issues that is funded under a grant from the

Ford Foundation. Last month, we issued the first report to stem from this work, which provides an overview of poverty in rural areas. Additional reports are now in progress on the rural working poor, the housing conditions facing poor rural households, and the health status of the rural poor. I would like to share with you today some of our findings, both from our just-issued report and from several of the reports now being drafted.[1] The concluding part of this testimony then discusses several food program issues that have relevance to the issue of hunger in rural areas.

Rural Poverty: More Pervasive than is Commonly Recognized

Many Americans regard poverty primarily as an urban issue. The image of the inner-city welfare mother has come to represent the poor in the minds of a substantial portion of the public and among many policymakers as well. While there is little question that the concentrated poverty of America's large cities is serious and demands attention, we often tend to overlook the serious poverty problems that also mark many rural areas.

In fact, poverty rates are *higher* in rural than in urban areas. In 1987 (the latest year for which Census data on poverty are available), some 16.9 percent of all Americans living in nonmetropolitan areas -- or more than one in every six -- fell below the poverty line. (The poverty line was $9,056 for a family of three in 1987.) By contrast, some 12.5 percent of the residents of metropolitan areas -- or one in eight -- were poor.

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[1] The material on pages 2-10 of this testimony rests on the research work of Kathryn Porter, Isaac Shapiro, Paul Leonard, and Ed Lazere of the Center staff.

That poverty rates are higher in nonmetropolitan than in metropolitan areas should not be that surprising, since metropolitan areas include both the central cities and the surrounding suburbs. Poverty rates are much lower in the suburbs than within the city boundaries.

What is striking, however, is that poverty rates *are now nearly as high in rural America as in the nation's central cities.*

- As noted, 16.9 percent of rural resident (i.e., residents of nonmetropolitan areas[2]) lived in poverty in 1987.
- This is almost as high as the poverty rate in our nation's central cities, which was 18.6 percent that year. ("Central cities" is the term used by the Census Bureau to denote the are within the city boundaries, exclusive of the suburbs.)

Moreover, poverty has risen as sharply in rural areas over the past decade as in the cities. From 1978 to 1987, the rural poverty rate rose from 13.5 percent to 16.9 percent. During the same period, it climbed in the central cities from 15.4 percent to 18.6 percent. (Comparisons with 1978 are instructive, because national economic conditions in 1978 were very similar to those in 1987. The national unemployment rate was nearly identical in both years.)

Poverty rates in both rural and urban America currently stand at unusually high levels for this stage of an economic recovery. The rural poverty rate for 1987 -- the fifth year of an economic recovery -- was a high as the rate of 1975, the deepest recession year of the 1970s.

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[2] Throughout this testimony, the terms "rural" and "nonmetropolitan" are used interchangeably. Thus, the rural poverty rates cited here are the "nonmetropolitan" poverty rates of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Poverty Among Particular Groups

Among most racial/ethnic, age, and demographic groups, poverty rates now are as high or higher in rural America as in the central cities. And despite the popular conception of concentrated black poverty in the nation's cities, blacks living in rural areas are *more likely* to be poor than blacks living in central cities.

- Among both whites and Hispanics, poverty rate are as high in rural areas as in the central cities (see below).
- Among blacks, poverty rates are higher in rural areas. One-third (33.3 percent) of all blacks living in central cities were poor in 1987, a strikingly high poverty rate. But more than two-fifths -- 44.1 percent -- of all blacks in rural areas were poor.

Poverty Rates for Race and Ethnic Origin

	Nonmetro	Total Metro	Central Cities
White	13.7%	9.6%	13.8%
Black	44.1%	30.7%	33.3%
Hispanic	35.6%	27.6%	31.7%

- Among female-headed families, the poverty rate in rural America (44.8 percent) is virtually identical to the poverty rate in the central cities (44.4 percent).
- The overall poverty rate for two-parent families is also similar in rural areas and in the central cities. Among black two-parent families, however, poverty rates in rural areas are more than double the rates in the cities. Some 12.3 percent of all black two-parent families in the central cities fall below the poverty line. But 27 percent of black two-parent families in rural areas are poor.

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- The poverty rate for children is higher in the central cities, but not by much. Some 29.6 percent of children in the central cities are poor, while 23.1 percent of rural children are poor. Among black children, poverty rates are higher in the rural areas than in the cities. Some 46.2 percent of black children in the central cities are poor. But some 57 percent of black children in rural areas -- or more than half -- are poor.

- Among the elderly, the poverty rate is as high or higher in rural as in urban areas. Poverty rates are especially high among elderly black people living in rural areas. Nearly half of all rural elderly blacks (46.4 percent) live in poverty. Four of every five (79.9 percent) elderly black women in rural areas who live alone or with non-relatives are below the poverty line.

The Composition of the Rural Poor

While poverty rates in rural America are generally similar to those for the nation's cities, the *composition* of the poverty population differs significantly in rural and urban areas. Simply stated, *the rural poor are more likely than the urban poor to live in two parent families and to work.* They are also more likely to be white, because the rural population at all income levels has a lower proportion of minorities than does the urban population. In 1987, nearly three-fourths (71.3 percent) of the rural poor were white, compared to slightly more than half (54.2 percent) of the central city poor. In addition, the rural poor are more likely than the urban poor to be elderly.

One of the dominant characteristics of rural poverty is the extent to which poor rural families are likely to be families in which both parents are present. Of all the rural poor who live in families, more than three out of five (61.1 percent) live in two-parent families. (In the central cities, by contrast, some 41.7 percent of the poor who live in families are members of two-parent families.)

Similarly, poor residents of rural areas are very likely to work. *Nearly two of every three poor families living in rural areas contained at least one worker in 1987. Nearly one*

quarter had at least two workers. While the proportion of the poor who work is also substantial in urban areas, it is significantly less than in the rural areas. (In 1987, a little more than half of all poor families in metropolitan areas contained at least one worker, while a little under one-sixth had two or more workers.)

The rural poor are also likely to live in the South. While the 17 states designated by the Census Bureau as the South contain slightly more than one-third (34.2 percent) of the total U.S. population and more than two-fifths (43.4 percent) of all rural residents, they contain over half (53.6 percent) of all the rural poor.

The Rural Working Poor

As noted, one of the most striking characteristics of rural poverty is the extent to which the rural poor work. A large majority of rural poor families are families in which someone works, but the family remains poor. Moreover, many of those rural families that do not have any workers are families in which the only adults are elderly, disabled, or ill.

- In 1987, some 70.5 percent -- or seven out of every ten -- rural poor family heads who were not ill, disabled, or retired were people who worked during the year.
- An even higher proportion of the family heads of poor rural *two-parent* families who were not ill, disabled, or retired -- some 85.6 percent, or more than five of every six -- were people who worked during the year.
- More than half of those who head poor single-parent families in rural areas and who were not ill, disabled, or retired were people who worked during the year. (Many of those who did not work were single mothers of young children.)

Impressive as these data are, they *understate* the extent of work among rural poor families because they count only work performed by the family head. In many rural

poor families, other family members work as well.

Not only is the proportion of the poor that work higher in rural than in urban settings, but the proportion of workers who are poor is also higher in rural areas. Census data show that poverty rates in rural areas substantially exceed the rates in urban areas for all types of working families -- for white and black working families, for two-parent and single parent working families, for families with a full-time worker and for families with a part-time worker. Overall, the poverty rate for rural working families is *about double* the rate for urban working families. In other words, a family in which the household head works is about twice as likely to be poor in rural areas as in metropolitan areas.

This means that in rural America -- to an even greater degree than in urban America -- work provides no assurance that a family will not be poor.

Why Has Poverty Risen in Rural America?

There are a number of reasons that poverty has risen substantially in rural areas over the past decade. Economic factors have played a particularly key role here.

Rural areas were hit harder than urban areas by the recessions of the early 1980s and have recovered less in recent years. This is borne out both by unemployment data and by wage levels.

While the nonmetro unemployment rate was lower than the metro rate throughout the 1970s, the nonmetro rate has exceeded the metro rate in every year since 1980. The nonmetro rate rose more than the metro rate during the recessions and then declined at a slower pace during the ensuing recovery.

Furthermore, rural areas are much more likely than urban areas to contain pockets of persistently high unemployment. Of the 9.4 million people in the labor force who lived in counties where the unemployment rate equalled 10 percent or greater in 1987, more than half (54.7 percent) lived in rural counties -- even though only one-fifth (21.4 percent) of the overall U.S. labor force lived in these counties. In fact, in 1987, one of every five people in the rural labor force resided in a county with a double-digit unemployment rate.

Compounding this problem, wage and earnings levels are also considerably lower in rural than in urban areas, and in recent years they have fallen farther behind the levels paid in urban areas. This is the principal reason that poverty rates among families with a full-time year-round worker are more than twice as high in rural areas as in the metropolitan U.S.

Researchers at USDA's Economic Research Service have found that the average earnings of rural workers were $1,150 lower in 1986 than in 1979, after adjusting for inflation. Real earnings fell faster among rural than among urban workers during the recessionary period from 1979 to 1982 and then rose more slowly during the ensuing recovery period. By 1986, the average real earnings of urban workers had recovered all the ground lost since 1979, while the earnings of rural workers were still well below 1979 levels. By 1986, the average real earnings of rural workers were 25 percent lower than the average real earnings of their urban counterparts.

Underlying these adverse economic trends have been fundamental shifts in the economies of many rural areas. The decline of manufacturing industries in many rural areas has been particularly significant. The manufacturing industries located in rural

areas are primarily what is known as "routine" manufacturing. "Complex" manufacturing industries, in which the jobs tend to require higher levels of skill training, are more likely to be located in metropolitan areas. This distinction between routine and complex manufacturing is important because routine manufacturing jobs are those in which very low paid foreign labor can most readily be substituted for U.S. labor. Hence, these are the manufacturing jobs most likely to move overseas. Many routine manufacturing jobs lost in rural America during the early 1980s appear to have been lost permanently.

The low levels of education and skills that predominate in many rural areas deepen these problems. Many new jobs being created in our increasing technological economy require increased levels of education and skills. In some rural areas, employment opportunities may exist, but many of the rural poor may not be able to qualify for them. A new study issued recently by the State of North Carolina Department of Administration, entitled *Chronic Unemployment in Rural North Carolina*, contains the results of a survey conducted of unemployed rural people in that state. When asked the main reason they had not been able to obtain or keep a job, 12 percent cited not being able to read well enough and an additional 58 percent cited not having adequate skills or training.

In addition, the comparatively low levels of education and skills in many rural areas may make some employers less likely to locate there.

Finally, Census data also show that reductions in government assistance at both federal and state levels have contributed significantly to the increase in poverty rates. In 1979, nearly one in every five families with children (18.9 percent) that was poor before

receipt of government benefits was lifted out of poverty by these benefits. By 1987, only about one in every ten (10.5 percent) such families with children was lifted out of poverty by these benefits. Although these data do not include the value of non-cash benefits, the story is similar when such benefits are counted. The Census data also show that when food and housing benefits (such as food stamps) are counted as income, some 35.5 percent of families with children were lifted out of poverty by government benefits in 1979, but only 22.1 percent were lifted out of poverty in 1987.

I should note that these data on the declining impact of government benefit programs are national data; urban and rural breakdowns are not available. The pattern reflected in the data is so clear, however, that there is no reason to believe it has not affected rural and urban areas both. Reductions in the purchasing power of AFDC benefits levels, sharp contractions in unemployment insurance coverage, and reductions in food stamp assistance in inflation-adjusted terms have affected rural and urban areas alike.

Increased Expenses

Adding to the problems of both the rural and the urban poor have been increases in housing costs. For many of the rural poor, housing costs now consume so much of their limited incomes that little is left for other necessities, such as food.

In February 1989, the Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued the long-awaited results of a national survey of housing conditions in the U.S. The survey results provide the first Census data ever published on the housing costs of poor households.

The survey data are disturbing. Under official HUD standards promulgated in the early 1980s, housing is considered affordable for a low income household if it consumes no more than 30 percent of the household's income. Yet the new survey data show that in 1985 (the year covered by the survey), some *72 percent of all poor households in non-metropolitan areas of the U.S.* paid more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing. In other words, nearly three of every four poor households in the non-metro U.S. bear housing costs that are outside the affordable range.

Moreover, the data show that nearly half (42 percent) of all poor non-metro households paid at least half of their incomes for housing -- and more than one in every four paid at least 70 percent of income for housing.

The data also show that the typical poor household in non-metro areas had an income of less than $5,000 in 1985. For renter households in that income range (i.e., with incomes of less than $5,000), the affordable housing squeeze was especially severe. The number of housing units in non-metro areas that were "affordable" for these households under the HUD standards (i.e., that rented for no more than 30 percent of the income of a household making $5,000 a year) was *less than half* the number of non-metro households with incomes in this range.

I would note that many poor households in non-metro areas not only bear high housing costs, but also live in substandard housing. The new data show that 23 percent of all poor non-metro households -- and 28 percent of all non-metro households that receive food stamps -- live in substandard housing. In addition, the Census data show that while poor non-metro households constitute less than one-fifth of all the households residing in non-metro areas, they occupy 44 percent of non-metro units with rats, 54

percent of the units with holes in the floor, and 55 percent without complete bathrooms inside their homes.

The Role of Food Assistance Programs

The recital of these rather grim data helps to explain the presence of hunger in rural America. When large numbers of rural residents are poor (in many cases, even when they work) and when housing costs eat up so large a share of the limited incomes of these residents, the potential for a serious hunger problem is large.

To combat this problem, effective food assistance policies are needed. While the food stamp program and other food assistance programs reach substantial numbers of low income Americans in rural areas, these programs could do better. What are sometimes called "barriers to participation" remain more substantial in rural than in urban areas.

In addition, the level of food assistance provided to poor households meets significantly less of the need today than it did only a few years ago, despite the passage of the Hunger Prevention Act last year. This is chiefly attributable to two factors: 1) the disappearance of much of USDA's surplus food stocks, which in turn has resulted in sharp cutbacks in the amount of food distributed to poor households through the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program; and 2) rapid increases in food prices in recent months that have significantly outpaced food stamp benefit levels.

In FY 1986 and FY 1987, nearly $850 million of food was distributed to poor households through TEFAP. In FY 1983, 1984, and 1985, approximately $1 million worth of food was distributed each year. Then in FY 1988, this level fell to $585 million. And in FY 1989, it is likely to be 50 to 75 percent lower than in FY 1988, even

when the foods purchased under the authority of the Hunger Prevention Act are included.

Furthermore, due to sharp food price increases, food stamp allotments are now lagging behind actual food costs. USDA has reported that in March 1989, it cost $318.90 for a family of four to purchase the Thrifty Food Plan, the government's lowest cost food plan. But the maximum food stamp allotment now is significantly lower than this, at $300 a month for a family of four with no income. Food stamp benefits now fall further behind the actual cost of the Thrifty Food Plan than at any time since the early 1980s.

Adding to the problem, the *Los Angeles Times* reported last month that donations of food to food banks appear to be dropping. The *Times* reported that "belt tightening throughout the food industry," spurred in part by threats of mergers and takeovers, appears to be causing a drop in corporate donations.

Finally, the budget reductions of the early 1980s resulted in a long-term reduction in the levels of food stamp assistance provided. Total food stamp benefits were nearly $800 million lower in FY 1988 than in FY 1981, after adjusting for inflation.[3]

Furthermore, food stamp participation has declined during the 1980s. In 1980, there were 68 food stamp participants for every 100 people in poverty. In 1987, there were 58 food stamp participants for every 100 people who were poor.[4] While there

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[3] This comparison of food stamp benefits provided in FY 1981 to benefits provided in FY 1988 excludes benefits provided in Puerto Rico in both years. If Puerto Rico were included, the decline would be larger. Benefit figures have been adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) for food at home.

[4] These figures simply represent food stamp participation as a percentage of the poverty population. These figures do *not* reflect a food stamp participation rate for poor people, however, since not all people below the poverty line are eligible for food stamps

were 3.2 million more people living in poverty in 1987 than in 1980, there were 900,000 fewer receiving food stamps in an average month. A recent study by USDA provides further evidence of a decline in participation rates. It indicates that of all poor people who are eligible for food stamps, the percentage actually receiving food stamps has dropped since 1980.

Improving the Food Stamp Program in Rural Areas

Efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the food assistance programs in combatting rural hunger thus are needed. Such efforts should include measures to improve the operations of the food stamp program in rural areas. The food stamp program is the nation's principal food assistance program. It represents, by far, the most substantial such program in the rural U.S.

A new Census report issued just a few weeks ago shows that during a 32-month period from 1983 through 1986, nearly *one in every six* residents of the nation's nonmetropolitan areas received food stamps for at least one month. At the same time, fewer than one in 25 received food stamps in *every* month during this 32-month period, indicating that large proportions of those rural poor households that rely on food stamps use them to get through periods of temporary hardship.

A detailed examination of potential improvements in the food stamp program in rural areas lies beyond the scope of this testimony. On page 16, I have listed several food stamp issues that may be useful for the Subcommittee to explore as it grapples with

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and some who are modestly above the poverty line (primarily between 100 and 130 percent of the poverty line) are eligible.

this matter in the months ahead. I would be pleased to provide additional material on these issues if the Subcommittee should desire.

I would like to close by expressing hope that the Subcommittee will steadfastly pursue its examination of rural hunger -- and of possible adjustments in the food stamp and other food programs where such adjustments can help make progress on this front. Some of the developments underlying rural hunger -- such as the erosion of the manufacturing base in a number of rural areas -- are largely beyond the ability of federal policy to address. But improvements in our nation's food assistance programs are very much within Congress' realm.

Rural Food Stamp Issues for Possible Exploration by the Subcommittee

- Examining ways to improve access to the food stamp program in rural areas, particularly by working poor households who may have difficulty getting to food stamp offices due to the combined effects of long distances, lack of transportation, and conflicts with work hours.

- Ensuring that mail issuance of food stamps, which has been found to improve program access in rural areas, is feasible in rural areas except those where it would not be cost-effective (and ensuring that USDA regulations relating to mail issuance do not unnecessarily deter the use of mail issuance in rural jurisdictions in which it would be cost effective).

- Examining the impact in rural areas of recent actions by the Social Security Administration to require various categories of food stamp applicants to travel to the district Social Security office to apply for a Social Security number, rather than allowing them (as has been done for years) to apply for the Social Security number at the food stamp office at the same time that they apply for food stamps.

- Examining whether increased barriers to participation in rural areas, or delays in provision of benefits, are likely to result from recent federal rules requiring that *all* adult household members sign the food stamp application (rather than just the responsible adult member submitting the application, as has been done throughout the program's past history).

- Examining whether various aspects of the program's assets limits are keeping needy rural households out of the program.

- Ensuring that the food stamp program enhances rather than hinders efforts to improve education and basic skill levels among the rural poor.

- Examining whether the current food stamp benefit structure provides adequate benefits to those poor rural households whose housing costs consume extremely large proportions of their income.

(Attachment follows:)

POVERTY IN RURAL AMERICA

A National Overview

Kathryn H. Porter

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES
Washington, D.C.

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, located in Washington, D.C., is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization that studies government spending and the programs and public policy issues that have an impact on low income Americans. The Center is funded by grants from foundations.

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INTRODUCTION

To most Americans, poverty is predominantly an urban issue. The image of the inner-city welfare mother has come to represent the poor in the minds of much of the general public and many policymakers. There is no doubt that the concentrated poverty of America's large cities poses serious problems both for the residents of those areas and for our society. In trying to address the problems of the urban poor, however, we often tend to overlook poverty in rural areas.

In fact, poverty rates are *higher* in rural areas than in metropolitan areas. Over nine million of the poor -- more than one of every four poor Americans -- live outside of a metropolitan area.

Not only are the rural poor often overlooked, but policies formulated to address the problems of the poor frequently treat low income rural people as if their problems were the same as those of the inner-city poor. At the other extreme, policies designed to ameliorate rural poverty sometimes assume that all the rural poor live on farms. (In fact, fewer than 10 percent of the rural poor live on farms.) The popular notions of poverty reflect the tendency of the public and policymakers to view the problems of the poor as if all those in poverty shared a similar background.

In reality, the poor population has many different faces and different problems. One set of policy prescriptions is unlikely to provide remedies for the problems of all poor people. Instead, those who would deal with the problems of the poor need to understand the different aspects of poverty.

This report focuses on the rural poor. To provide a better understanding of who the rural poor are, the report describes their characteristics and examines how the rural poor are similar to and different from the urban poor. This report, the first in a series on rural poverty to be issued by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, provides an overview of the rural poor and sets the context for subsequent reports that will explore factors leading to poverty among rural people and why poverty is more prevalent in rural than in metropolitan areas. The series will also include papers outlining possible policy alternatives to alleviate rural poverty.

(The complete report is held in the committee files.)

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STATEMENT OF ELLEN HAAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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BEFORE THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON DOMESTIC MARKETING, CONSUMER RELATIONS
AND NUTRITION

MAY 17, 1989

PUBLIC VOICE FOR FOOD & HEALTH POLICY

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Chairman Hatcher and members of the Subcommittee, good morning. I'm Ellen Haas, Executive Director of Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, a non-profit consumer research, education and advocacy organization focusing on food, agriculture and health issues.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you the findings of our four years of research on the nutritional conditions of our nation's rural poor. I will also share with the Subcommittee a number of cost effective recommendations to address the conditions we believe to be the most critical.

Americans have become increasingly concerned about the many faces of hunger in America. The picture that often comes to mind is the urban homeless or the welfare mother on city streets. Yet an equally disturbing, but an often ignored group is the nearly 10 million people who live in protracted poverty in rural communities.

The rural poor are among the most invisible of Americans even though the poverty rate in rural communities is considerably higher than that of our nation's metropolitan areas, and rivals that of America's core inner city areas.

The rural poor are geographically remote and dispersed, and politically weak. Commanding little media attention, the rural poor have been too often neglected in national policy making

deliberations and are too often served by policies fashioned primarily for the urban poor.

In 1984, Public Voice began to examine the nutritional conditions the rural poor face, and to create, with support of the Ford Foundation, an empirical knowledge base on their nutrition and health status. Thus far, we have documented the serious nutritional shortcomings in the diets of the rural poor, identified some of the causes of their poor nutrition, and explored policies that would help to remedy the nutritional deficiencies uncovered.

Poverty in Rural America

Contrary to popular belief, poverty is not primarily an urban phenomenon. In 1987 the poverty rate in rural America was 16.9 percent, while in metropolitan areas the poverty rate was 12.5 percent. In addition, the poverty rate in rural communities was almost as high as the 18.6 percent poverty rate in central cities for 1987.

In many ways, the profile of the rural poor is quite different from that of their urban counterparts. In comparison to the urban poor, THE RURAL POOR ARE:

1. MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS: Of all the rural poor who lived in families in 1987, 61.1 percent lived in families headed by two parents. By contrast, in central cities only 41.7 percent of the poor who lived in families lived in families headed by two parents.

2. MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A JOB: Nearly two-thirds of rural poor families (64.4%) had at least one member working in 1987 and roughly one-fourth (23.4%) had at least two workers. In contrast, just over one-half of their metropolitan counterparts (54.1%) had at least one worker and 15.9 percent had two or more.

3. LESS EDUCATED: A significantly smaller proportion of the rural poor complete either high school or college than do their urban counterparts. According to the 1980 Census, 59 percent of rural persons 25 years of age or older had completed high school, and only 11.2 percent had completed four years of college. Comparable rates among central city poor were 64.9 percent and 17.9 percent, respectively.

4. OLDER: In 1983, the elderly accounted for 12.4 percent of the rural poor population, a figure almost 50 percent higher than for the central city poor.

5. NON-MINORITY: In 1986, nearly three-quarters (73.5%) of the rural poor were white as compared to 52 percent of the urban poor being white.

In other words, those who work, those who are in two-parent families, and those who are elderly comprise a large majority of the nearly 10 million rural poor.

Adequacy of the Rural Poor's Diet

With poverty comes the harsh realities of all too often being forced to make choices between food and shelter, between food and heating and between food and taking a sick child to the doctor. Add

to poverty the rigors imposed by living in rural communities with its extreme isolation, the vast distances between neighboring towns and the low concentration of people, and the likelihood of obtaining an adequate diet becomes even more remote. In fact, the rural poor are profoundly hampered by poor nutrition and by the debilitating health consequences that follow.

Public Voice has examined the nutritional status of the rural poor through comprehensive data collection and analysis of national nutrition data previously untapped for what it could reveal about the rural poor. Public Voice's 1986 study, Rising Poverty, Declining Health: The Nutritional Status of the Rural Poor, found that the rural poor do not consume adequate amounts of the essential nutrients, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. The data revealed that almost one out of every two poor persons living in rural communities failed to consume even two-thirds of their daily Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for these vital nutrients. In fact these analyses found that the rural poor were significantly more likely to have nutrient intakes lower than the U.S. non-poor for eight of nine essential nutrients.

Even when compared to the inner-city poor, the rural poor have lower intakes of key nutrients. According to findings from USDA's 1986 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII) rural low-income women aged 19-50 had lower intakes of vitamin A and vitamin C than did their urban counterparts.

As a direct result of the rural poor's inadequate intake of foods rich in essential nutrients, we have found that many exhibit

clinical symptoms of advanced nutritional deterioration. In fact the rural poor are one and one-half times more likely to have vitamin A and vitamin C serum blood levels below acceptable standards as compared to the rural non-poor. Perhaps most shocking of all, we found that rural poor children were two and one-half times more likely than the rural non-poor to experience growth stunting; an important indicator of chronic malnutrition.

Our research has also documented the alarming status of infant health in the poorest rural counties; another indicator of the poor nutrition and inadequate access to maternal and infant health care. Analyzing data from the National Center for Health Statistics for America's 332 poorest rural counties from 1975 to 1985, our study Off To A Poor Start: Infant Health in Rural America, found that rates of infant mortality and infants born at dangerously low weight were dramatically higher in these counties than the nation as a whole. Moreover, the study found that low birthweight rates in rural counties, already higher than national rates, had increased significantly during the 1980s. This trend dramatically reversed previous years of progress. Low birthweight babies are 20 times more likely to die in their first year of life, and those that live often suffer severe disabilities.

When nutritional status is even marginally compromised, it exacts the greatest toll on young victims. Among young children, poor nutrition impairs learning, cognitive development, and the ability to concentrate. Further, due to their lowered resistance to infections, marginally malnourished children tend to miss school

more often, and are generally less motivated learners than well-nourished school-age children. Among adults, the effects are similar; lower resistance to infection, lower work productivity, diminished capacity for prolonged physical work and decreased worker motivation.

Poor nutrition observed among the rural poor then should be of serious concern to policy makers. It not only causes immediate human suffering, but it also undermines health and well-being and thereby exacts an enormous direct and indirect toll on the individual, the family and society.

Federal Food Assistance Programs

Despite their extreme nutritional vulnerabilities, the rural poor remain disproportionately under-served by most federal food assistance programs. In 1985 for example, 46 percent of the households living below the poverty level in urban areas participated in the Food Stamp program, whereas only 40 percent of rural poor households participated in the program. That same year, 73 percent of the urban poor households with school age children (less than 18 years old) had children receiving free or reduced school lunch meals, while only 66 percent of their rural counterparts received free or reduced school lunch meals.

The Summer Food Service Program for Children stands out as a particularly inaccessible program for children of rural poor families. Based on a national survey conducted of Summer Feeding Program Directors, we found that only 9.6 percent of America's

poor children participated in the Summer Food Service Program in 1986; 11.8 percent of the urban poor children participated in the program while only 5 percent of the rural poor children participated.

Recommendations to Reduce Rural Barriers to Federal Food Programs

Federal food assistance programs are designed to ensure that all poor Americans have access to the basic necessities of food, shelter and medical care. However, not only are the rural poor disproportionately underserved by these programs, but they face numerous unique barriers that prevent many of them from participating in these programs. We documented several of these in our two reports: Patterns of Risk: The Nutritional Status of the Rural Poor, and Profiles of Rural Poverty; Facing Barriers to the Food Stamp Program.

While the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 addresses many of the barriers preventing the rural poor from participating in federal food assistance programs, a great deal more still needs to be done. In particular there are four barriers to rural participation in the Food Stamp Program that we believe Congress needs to address most urgently.

The first deals with **ADJUSTING THE VEHICLE ASSET LIMIT.** One barrier to rural participation that affects a significant number of the most needy rural Americans is the vehicle asset limit. In the rugged, dirt road terrain that typifies much of the Appalachia,

the deep south, and the rural west, a reliable vehicle is a lifeline. While it is difficult for us here in Washington to imagine, many of the rural poor living in these areas must depend on their vehicles to haul water and wood to their homes which often lack indoor plumbing or piped-in fuel. And you all know that today, the value of a reliable vehicle, such as even a basic, two year old pick-up truck, substantially exceeds the $4,500 food stamp vehicle asset limit. Thus, many of the most needy, who would otherwise qualify for the food stamp program are ineligible because of the vehicle asset limit.

We recommend that this problem be addressed in two ways; the first is to increase the asset limit from $4,500 to $5,500 and increase that level annually to keep pace with inflation. The second is to either exempt those households with either no piped in water or fuel, or to establish a higher allowable value limit for one vehicle owned by such households before calculating its value toward the household's assets.

Two, Congress should PROMOTE/INITIATE GREATER OUTREACH EFFORTS ON A FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL. Research on the outreach needs of rural poor non-participants has consistently shown that "eligibility outreach" rather than "general informational outreach," is needed among this population. Since the overwhelming proportion of eligible non-participants do not participate because of their presumed ineligibility, it is logical that the needed first step is to design and support outreach campaigns targeted to address these critical misconceptions.

The problem of assumed ineligibility is further compounded by the strong negative stigma associated with the program in many rural communities. "Small town pride" keeps many eligible rural individuals and families away from the Food Stamp offices. This negative stigma is particularly prevalent among the "new poor," which include farmers and others affected by recent economic declines. Therefore, we recommend that the design of outreach programs be supported by the Agriculture Department, and that states be encouraged to carry-out these efforts, particularly in regions in which stigma is a serious problem. These efforts should be focused on the public at large.

Three, Congress should assure that **MAIL ISSUANCE IS AVAILABLE TO ALL RURAL RESIDENTS.** The lack of mail issuance in many rural areas poses a particular problem to those without their own transportation. The costs involved in obtaining food stamps in such states is often excessive and many eligible people do not participate as a result.

And finally, we recommend that **THE HOUSEHOLD DEFINITION BE ADJUSTED** to better address the needs of a growing number of rural poor, who live in over-crowded housing situations. The household definition, by counting the income and resources of close relatives who live together even if they are not supporting each other, seriously penalizes those rural poor residents who double-up in housing together. And we have observed during our site visits to various rural poor regions of the nation that over-crowding and

doubling up of families into single homes is surprisingly common--especially in the Southeast and Southwest.

Adjusting of the household definition in this way would also benefit many needy migrant farmworkers, who typically double and triple-up in labor camps while they work outside of their home bases.

Another program especially critical to the nutritional well-being of our nation's rural poor children is the Summer Food Service Program for Children. However, this program fails almost entirely in serving children in rural areas. There are four critical barriers that are largely responsible for the meager access rural poor children have to this important summer food program. In particular Congress should:

ALLOW PRIVATE NON-PROFIT GROUPS TO BE PROGRAM SPONSORS. Legislation enacted in 1981 disallowed for the first time all private non-profit organizations other than schools and residential camps from sponsoring the Summer Food Service Program. This forced many of the rural summer feeding programs to be shut down as they had been sponsored in large part by private non-profit organizations. Many rural schools are reluctant to sponsor such programs because of the higher costs of running the program in sparsely populated, rural areas. The cost of opening schools to prepare on-site meals with limited federal reimbursement dollars is prohibitive. As you may know, re-instatement of private non-profit groups was considered in the Hunger Prevention Act, but was

abandoned in the final moments during the last Congress. Instead legislation to fund a number of pilot programs was enacted.

ENSURE THAT OUTREACH EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT RURAL SPONSORS ARE FUNDED AND CARRIED OUT. While outreach to recruit sponsors for the Summer Food Service program was mandated in 1977, in reality the provision is meaningless as no federal dollars have ever been allocated. Without federal dollars, outreach is all but impossible, especially in states with small programs and only temporary staffs.

INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR RURAL AREAS. The current reimbursement system provides inadequate compensation for the higher administrative costs per student, and no additional compensation whatsoever for the higher per student operating costs incurred in rural areas. According to numerous state and local child nutrition program administrators with whom we have discussed this issue, the failure on the part of USDA to adequately compensate for the significant cost differentials between rural and urban areas poses the greatest barrier to potential rural sponsors. Small programs are hurt the most by the per-meal design of the reimbursement rate. There are excessive bussing costs in rural areas unlike urban areas where drop-in sites are often used. Food costs are typically much higher in rural areas and vendors have to travel excessive distances to deliver the food to non-self prep sites. In the case of rural self prep sites, overhead costs must be spread out over far fewer children than in urban areas.

ADJUST ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR AREAS PROVIDING SUMMER FEEDING. Along with the exclusion of private non-profit sponsors, the 1981 summer feeding legislation further restricted the program by increasing the baseline number of children that must be eligible for free or reduced price school lunch meals from 33% to 50% in order to operate a summer feeding program in an area. In many rural communities the towns are so small that schools serve large areas made up of children with diverse economic backgrounds. Despite the number of poor and needy children in the area, they have been unable to qualify sites with the higher eligibility ruling.

Recommendations to Improve Nutritional Status by Expanding the Availability of Fruits and Vegetables

In addition to reducing the barriers that prevent many of the rural poor from participating in federal food assistance programs Congress should also work toward improving the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables to the rural poor. Despite the belief that the rural poor have access to fruits and vegetables because they live in the country and can grow their own, this is simply not true. Our research indicates that fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin A and vitamin C are the foods most lacking in the diets of the rural poor.

One factor that may contribute to the inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables is the rural poor's limited access to an affordable and varied selection of fresh produce. The rural poor

tend to do more of their shopping in small independent "mom and pop" stores. Typically these stores have a limited selection of fresh fruits and vegetables, and prices in these stores are often inflated. Moreover, too few farmers sell their produce in economically depressed rural areas.

There are at least two existing programs that, if expanded, could substantially improve the availability and affordability of fresh produce in rural poor areas. One is the Farmers' Market Coupon Program. This program focuses on the role farmers' markets can play in upgrading the nutritional status of poor Americans. The Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 authorized $2 million for each of three years to help fund Farmers' Market Coupon programs. USDA recently awarded three-year grants to ten states for the establishment of demonstration programs designed to provide impoverished families participating in the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program with $10-$20 worth of coupons that may be exchanged for fresh produce at selected farmers' markets.

By establishing the farmers' market coupon program in rural poor communities, the rural poor who participate in the program would be much more likely to purchase a wide variety of inexpensive fresh fruits and vegetables at least three to four months a year. Not only are they likely to purchase food at a farmers' markets with their coupons, but an evaluation of the Massachusetts program found that many of the coupon recipients become repeat customers and spend cash for fresh produce.

If in fact the coupon program does stimulate the establishment of farmers' markets in poor rural areas, then in addition to coupon recipients, all of the poor in the neighborhood could benefit from the program. Many of the rural poor have limited access to transportation and so have difficulty traveling distances to farmers' markets. By expanding farmers' markets to rural low-income areas, the poor would have access to a greater variety of affordable, fresh produce.

In addition to assisting the nutritionally vulnerable rural poor, the farmers' market coupon program would benefit small family farmers in rural areas by creating new outlets for their produce.

If evaluations from the demonstration projects show the program to be effective, Congress should encourage the promotion and expansion of these markets in low income rural areas. In particular Congress should **AUTHORIZE THE FUNDS NECESSARY TO ALLOW ALL 50 STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FARMERS' MARKET COUPON PROGRAM.** Congress should also **REQUIRE USDA TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATING FARMERS TO ACCEPT FOOD STAMPS BY EASING THE FOOD STAMP CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FARMERS.** Currently each farmer must set up a separate food stamp bank account and apply to USDA for food stamp certification. Many farmers believe the difficulty incurred establishing a separate bank account is not worth the effort because few food stamp users purchase food at farmers' markets. The result has been that only a small number of farmers accept food stamps.

One group, the Massachusetts Farmers' Federation is attempting to make it easier for farmers to redeem food stamp coupons for cash. What the Federation is trying to do is open one bank account to facilitate all farmers and certify each farmers' market as one unit. This would eliminate much of the burden for individual farmers.

Another federal initiative that could assist the rural poor in gaining access to fresh fruits and vegetables would be to encourage the formation and expansion of local and state gleaning programs. Gleaning, a custom dating back to biblical times, is the process of salvaging food that would otherwise be wasted and distributing it to the poor.

Roughly 20% of America's food supply goes to waste each year during harvesting, storage, transportation and processing, according to a General Accounting Office (GAO) study. This perfectly nutritious food could feed nearly 49 million people each year if it were not left to rot or be trashed, according to the GAO report.

In order to promote the development of gleaning programs, Congress should provide incentives to farmers, the trucking industry and local organizations to encourage their involvement in gleaning programs. In particular, Congress should:

FULLY RESTORE AND EXPAND A TAX CREDIT TO NON-INCORPORATED FARMERS for produce gleaned in their fields. Until 1969, this tax credit existed and it was partially restored in 1976. But, the

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restored tax credit only applied to corporate farms, not family-run non-incorporated farms.

PROVIDE TAX INCENTIVES TO TRUCKING COMPANIES WHO DONATE THEIR TRUCKS to transport gleaned foods when returning with empty loads.

EXEMPT FARMERS AND OTHER FOOD DONORS FROM LIABILITY SUITS for injuries that may occur during the gleaning process.

ESTABLISH A NATIONAL GLEANING CLEARINGHOUSE with satellite clearinghouses in each state. The national and state clearinghouses would collect and disseminate information relating to the kinds, amounts and geographical locations of agricultural products not completely harvested.

Recommendations to Improve the Rural Poor's Access to an Affordable and Quality Food Supply

Although data is limited, there is some evidence to suggest that many of the rural poor have less access to an affordable and quality food supply than do other Americans.

Supermarkets generally carry a greater variety of foods, and at better prices than the smaller independent "mom and pop" stores. But many of the rural poor don't have access to supermarkets and are thus forced to shop in smaller, more expensive food stores. Preliminary findings from a study we are currently conducting that examining the rural poor's access to an affordable and quality food supply, have shown that there are significantly fewer supermarkets in rural areas as compared to urban areas. For example, of the 78 rural counties in Nebraska, there were no supermarkets in over half

(54%). Every urban county in Nebraska, on the other hand, had at least 4 supermarkets in 1987.

In addition, our research has found that poor, rural counties have far fewer supermarkets than non-poor rural counties. Of the 75 rural counties in Mississippi, 41 have at least 25 percent of their total population living below the poverty line. In these rural poor counties the majority have between one and three supermarkets while most of the non poor rural counties have at least four.

In addition to the lack of supermarkets in low-income rural areas, many of the rural poor cannot shop regularly outside of their area because they do not have access to transportation. A significant number of the rural poor do not own their own automobile. And in impoverished rural counties, public transportation rarely exists.

By doing more of their shopping in small independent food stores, the quality of the rural poor's food supply is also limited. For example, a study conducted by Ambrose reported in the Journal of Business in 1979, found that smaller stores generally have poorer quality food and more restricted food choices.

If the nearly 10 million rural poor, with their limited purchasing power, had greater access to an affordable and quality food supply they would be more likely to consume a nutritious diet and thus improve their nutritional status. Therefore, creative rural development strategies are needed to help establish or to strengthen and increase the economic viability of food markets in

economically depressed areas. In particular, Congress should:

Include in any rural development legislation a separate title pertaining to food and nutrition policy initiatives. Specifically, we recommend:

One, the **establishment of low interest loans for the start-up or expansion of food markets in economically depressed areas.** One option, with little additional cost, would be to earmark a certain percentage of the Small Business Administration (SBA) or the Farmers Home Administration (FHA) loan programs for this program.

Two, the **establishment of three to five year federal grant demonstration programs to support local public and private organizations' initiatives that would stimulate the formation and/or expansion of local food markets in economically depressed rural areas.** Such demonstration projects might include:

1) supermarkets establishing satellite food outlets in neighboring poor towns;

2) the expansion of small "mom & pop" food stores;

3) the expansion of food markets attached to gas stations;

4) the establishment of rural food cooperatives and/or rural wholesale purchasing cooperatives. Yearly evaluations should be conducted to determine the progress of each demonstration project and evaluate its effectiveness.

And lastly, we recommend that **a three-year demonstration project designed to examine effective methods to link small family farmers to small retail food stores located in economically depressed areas be established.** Yearly evaluations should be

conducted to determine the effectiveness of the projects.

In summary, hunger in rural America is a very serious and pressing problem that needs immediate Congressional attention. We hope that the time has arrived when the misconceptions that continue to undermine the public's and policy-makers' willingness to take rural hunger seriously can be dispelled. I would like to thank Chairman Hatcher and members of the subcommittee for holding this important hearing. It is evidence of the subcommittee's commitment to improve the nutritional well-being of the rural poor.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC MARKETING, CONSUMER RELATIONS AND NUTRITION

Regarding

Obstacles facing rural poor people in acquiring food stamps and suggested improvements in the operation of the Food Stamp Program to assure its responsiveness to the needs of the rural poor.

MY NAME IS KATHY BICKING. I HAVE BEEN A PARALEGAL WITH LEGAL AID PROGRAMS FOR OVER ELEVEN YEARS. I HAVE REPRESENTED RURAL POOR PEOPLE IN IOWA AND VIRGINIA. WHILE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN BOTH STATES VARY, MANY OF THE PROBLEMS THEY FACE WITH REGARD TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ARE SIMILAR.

THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE BASED UPON DISCUSSIONS WITH CLIENTS, STATE AGENCY PERSONNEL AND OTHER LEGAL AID ADVOCATES.

NOT ALL OF THE CONCERNS HAVE IDENTIFIABLE SOLUTIONS. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THEY CREATE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, THEY NEED TO BE MENTIONED.

FARMERS ARE FRUSTRATED BECAUSE AGENCY WORKERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE FARM OPERATION. THIS RESULTS IN DELAYS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS REPORT RUDE TREATMENT BY STATE AGENCY WORKERS AND COMPLAIN OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND THE REPORTING AND VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. WHEN A FOOD STAMP APPLICANT OR RECIPIENT IS MISTREATED BY A FOOD STAMP WORKER, THAT LOCAL OFFICE HAS JUST CONDUCTED NEGATIVE OUTREACH. THE WORKER'S NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR IS DISCUSSED WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY. IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES, THIS INFORMATION IS SHARED VERY QUICKLY. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND THE VERIFICATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS GIVE SOME ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS SECOND THOUGHTS AS TO WHETHER THE "HASSLE" IS WORTH IT. SOME DECIDE IT IS NOT.

AGENCY WORKERS VOICE FRUSTRATION ABOUT MASSIVE PAPERWORK AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE PROGRAM THAT HAVE KEPT BOTH APPLICANTS, RECIPIENTS AND LOCAL WELFARE DEPARTMENTS IN A STATE OF CONFUSION RELEVANT TO THE PROGRAM. THE CONFUSION RESULTS IN AN INCREASED ERROR RATE. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS ARE HURT AND THE STATES ARE SANCTIONED.

Discussed below are some of the issues that are of the greatest concern to the rural poor. The list is not exhaustive, but simply seeks to highlight recurring issues in the Food Stamp Program that have a negative impact on the rural population.

1. Lack of Adequate Transportation

THEORETICALLY, THE LACK OF ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION SHOULD NOT PRESENT A BARRIER TO PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. APPLICATIONS CAN BE MAILED. THE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW CAN BE WAIVED. A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW CAN BE CONDUCTED. AN IN-HOME INTERVIEW CAN BE ARRANGED. THE FOOD STAMP WORKER CAN ASSIST IN SECURING VERIFICATION. AND, THE FOOD STAMPS CAN BE MAILED TO THE RECIPIENT. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A FOOD STAMP APPLICANT TO APPLY FOR AND RECEIVE FOOD STAMPS WITHOUT ENTERING A FOOD STAMP OFFICE. THEN WHY DOES THE LACK OF TRANSPORTATION REMAIN A BARRIER?

MOST FOOD STAMP APPLICANTS DO NOT KNOW THAT THEY CAN RECEIVE A FOOD STAMP APPLICATION BY MAIL UNTIL THEY HAVE ALREADY VISITED A FOOD STAMP OFFICE. A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WORKS ONLY WHEN THE APPLICANT HAS ACCESS TO A TELEPHONE. A FOOD STAMP SUPERVISOR IN RURAL VIRGINIA ESTIMATES THAT 45% OF HER CLIENTS DO NOT HAVE A TELEPHONE. VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS ALMOST ALWAYS RESULT IN THE APPLICANT OR RECIPIENT HAVING TO TRAVEL, SUCH AS TO THE NEAREST SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE TO SECURE SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS, OR TO MEDICAL PROVIDERS TO SECURE VERIFICATION OF MEDICAL EXPENSES.

NOT ALL LOCAL WELFARE OFFICES MAIL THE FOOD STAMP ISSU? STATES ARE FINANCIALLY PENALIZED WHEN THEY REPLACE LC STOLEN FOOD STAMPS. THIS SERVES AS A DISINCENTIVE

AND LOCAL OFFICES TO MAIL FOOD STAMP ISSUANCES. THERE ARE RURAL FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLDS WHO PAY $5.00 TO HAVE SOMEONE DRIVE THEM TO THE FOOD STAMP OFFICE TO PICK UP $10.00 WORTH OF FOOD STAMPS.

THESE HOUSEHOLDS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS COMPRISED OF ONE OR TWO-MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE ELDERLY AND ON FIXED INCOMES.

THE LACK OF ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES CREATES ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS. RURAL FOOD STAMP PARTICIPANTS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO LARGE COMPETITIVE SUPERMARKETS. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY PAY HIGHER PRICES FOR THEIR FOOD. THE CURRENT FOOD STAMP ALLOTMENTS ARE INADEQUATE. THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF BENEFITS CURRENTLY ALLOWED COMBINED WITH THE RURAL PERSON'S INABILITY TO COMPARISON SHOP SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES THAT HOUSEHOLD'S PURCHASING POWER.

THE LACK OF TRANSPORTATION ALSO PROVIDES PROBLEMS FOR RURAL FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE JOB SEARCH AND WORK REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS. FEDERAL EXEMPTIONS FROM PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROGRAM DO NOT INCLUDE THE LACK OF TRANSPORTATION. WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION, IT IS DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIRED JOB SEARCH AND WORK REGISTRATION PROVISIONS. NON-COMPLIANCE RESULTS IN THE LOSS OF PART OR ALL OF THE FOOD STAMP ALLOTMENT FOR TWO MONTHS.

THE LACK OF ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION WILL ALWAYS CREATE BARRIERS TO ONE DEGREE OR ANOTHER IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME STEPS THAT COULD BE TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS. THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. CREATE SATELLITE OFFICES IN THE VERY RURAL COMMUNITIES.

B. ALLOW HOUSEHOLDS THAT RECEIVE MINIMAL MONTHLY ALLOTMENTS TO RECEIVE TWO OR THREE MONTHLY ALLOTMENTS AT ONE TIME.

C. ENCOURAGE STATE AGENCIES TO MAIL RURAL FOOD STAMP ISSUANCES BY NOT SANCTIONING THE STATE WHEN THEY REPLACE LOST OR STOLEN FOOD STAMPS.

D. INCREASE THE FOOD STAMP ALLOTMENT LEVELS TO A REASONABLE AMOUNT TO ALLOW RURAL HOUSEHOLDS TO MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE, NUTRITIONAL DIET.

E. PROVIDE THAT THE LACK OF TRANSPORTATION WILL EXEMPT A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK REGISTRATION AND JOB SEARCH REQUIREMENTS.

2. <u>Two-Party Checks</u>

MANY FARMERS ARE DENIED FOOD STAMP BENEFITS BECAUSE THEY ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF CHECKS PAYABLE BOTH TO THE FARMER AND TO A THIRD-PARTY. TYPICALLY, THE THIRD PARTY WOULD BE AN AGENCY SUCH AS THE FARMERS' HOME ADMINISTRATION, ALTHOUGH THE THIRD PARTY COULD ALSO BE A BANK OR OTHER PRIVATE LENDER. THE PROCEEDS OF THE TWO-PARTY CHECK ARE NEVER MADE AVAILABLE TO THE FARMER, AND YET THE "INCOME" FROM THE CHECK IS COUNTED AS IF IT WERE AVAILABLE TO THE FARMER. IN THIS SITUATION, DESPITE THE FACT THAT A FARMER MAY BE DESTITUTE, THE FARMER

AND FAMILY ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE RECEIVED INCOME, AND THUS ARE DENIED FOOD STAMP BENEFITS. THERE CURRENTLY IS NOT A PROVISION IN THE REGULATIONS TO DISREGARD INCOME THAT IS NOT ACTUALLY AVAILABLE TO THESE FARM HOUSEHOLDS. I WOULD URGE CONGRESS TO ENACT A PROVISION THAT MADE CLEAR THAT UNLESS INCOME IS ACTUALLY AVAILABLE TO A FARMER, THAT INCOME NOT BE COUNTED FOR FOOD STAMP PURPOSES. SUCH A PROVISION WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY IN THAT INCOME MAY BE COUNTED IF IT IS ACTUALLY AVAILABLE TO THE HOUSEHOLD.

3. Standard Medical Expense Deduction

RURAL ELDERLY AND DISABLED FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS ARE EXPERIENCING A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY COMPLYING WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF THE MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION. THEY BECOME CONFUSED AS TO WHAT VERIFICATION IS NEEDED AND WHEN IT MUST BE SUBMITTED. AND, AGAIN, THE LACK OF TRANSPORTATION CREATES DIFFICULTY WHEN RURAL ELDERLY AND DISABLED PEOPLE MUST TRAVEL TO SECURE THE NECESSARY VERIFICATION FROM THE PROVIDERS. THE TRAVEL COSTS INCURRED CAN EASILY OUTWEIGH ANY INCREASE IN BENEFITS DUE TO A MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION.

ONE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A REASONABLE STANDARD MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION SIMILAR TO THE CURRENT STANDARD UTILITY DEDUCTION. AN ELDERLY OR DISABLED

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER WHO HAS MEDICAL EXPENSES WOULD BE ALLOWED TO USE THE STANDARD MEDICAL DEDUCTION OR ACTUAL EXPENSES. THIS WOULD ELIMINATE SOME OF THE CONFUSION FOR THOSE HOUSEHOLDS BY SIMPLIFYING THE VERIFICATION PROCESS. IT WOULD ALSO ELIMINATE SOME OF THE PAPERWORK FOR THE STATE AGENCY WORKERS AND, IN DOING SO, WOULD PROBABLY DECREASE THE ERROR RATE.

4. Mandatory Outreach

CURRENTLY THE STATES HAVE THE OPTION OF PROVIDING OUTREACH AT A 50% FEDERAL PARTICIPATION RATE. I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT OUTREACH BE MADE MANDATORY AND THAT A HIGHER FEDERAL PARTICIPATION RATE BE ALLOWED.

THERE ARE SOME RURAL ELDERLY PEOPLE IN VIRGINIA WHO WILL NOT APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT BY DOING SO THEY WILL LOSE ALL OF THE RESOURCES THEY OWN. BECAUSE OF THIS KIND OF MISCONCEPTION, OUTREACH SHOULD NOT BE CONDUCTED SOLELY BY THE STATE AGENCY BUT RATHER IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS SUCH AS COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES AND RURAL EXTENSION OFFICES.

THE MEDIA SHOULD BE USED TO PORTRAY THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM AS A POSITIVE, NECESSARY, NUTRITIONAL PROGRAM TO HELP ERASE THE WELFARE STIGMA THAT PREVENTS MANY ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS FROM EVER ENTERING THE FOOD STAMP OFFICE.

5. Literacy Education Component

THE ILLITERACY RATE IN OUR COUNTRY CONTINUES TO RISE. I LIVE IN A SMALL VIRGINIA COMMUNITY OF 4,800. AN ESTIMATED 60% OF THE ADULT WORK FORCE OVER THE AGE OF TWENTY-FIVE IS ILLITERATE. A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF MY CLIENTS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE NOTICES AND LETTERS THAT THEY RECEIVE FROM THE FOOD STAMP OFFICE. THEIR INABILITY TO READ HAS ALSO AFFECTED THEIR COMPREHENSION LEVEL. THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. WHILE THEY MAY UNDERSTAND WHY THEIR FOOD STAMPS WERE TERMINATED, THEY DO NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTAND THAT THEY CAN REAPPLY. CONSEQUENTLY, I HAVE SEEN CLIENTS GO WITHOUT FOOD STAMPS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT ONCE THEIR BENEFITS WERE TERMINATED THAT THEY WOULD NEVER BE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS AGAIN.

THEIR INABILITY TO READ AND COMPREHEND WHAT THEY ARE BEING TOLD BY A STATE AGENCY WORKER CAN RESULT IN UNNECESSARY TERMINATIONS FROM THE PROGRAM.

THE LIMITED JOB MARKET IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY IS FURTHER DIMINISHED FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO CANNOT READ. IF THEY DO FIND WORK, THE JOB RARELY PAYS ENOUGH TO ALLOW THE HOUSEHOLD TO ESCAPE POVERTY.

WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO FIGHT ILLITERACY. THAT IS TRUE FOR THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM AS WELL. THIS CAN BE DONE BY

DEVELOPING A COMPONENT UNDER THE WORK REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS OFFERING SPECIAL EDUCATION TO THOSE ILLITERATE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER FOR WORK AND CONDUCT A JOB SEARCH. IF THESE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LITERACY COMPONENT, THEY SHOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE WORK REGISTRATION AND JOB SEARCH REQUIREMENTS UNTIL THEY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE LITERACY PROGRAM.

6. Increase the $4,500 limit on the Fair Market Value of Automobiles

JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE LIMITED IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES. MANY OF THE RURAL POPULATION FIND IT NECESSARY TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT IN THE LARGER, SURROUNDING CITIES WHILE MAINTAINING THEIR RESIDENCE IN THE RURAL AREA. MORE FARM MEN AND WOMEN ARE SECURING JOBS TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR FARM INCOME. SOME RESIDENTS OF MY HOME COMMUNITY, EMPORIA, VIRGINIA, TRAVEL FROM FORTY TO SIXTY-FIVE MILES ONE WAY TO PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND BECAUSE OF EMPLOYMENT. THEY MUST HAVE RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION. THAT USUALLY REQUIRES AN EXPENDITURE OF MORE THAN $4,500 FOR AN AUTOMOBILE. SOME OF THESE FAMILIES MAY BE INCOME ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS BUT WILL BE DENIED BENEFITS BECAUSE OF THE VALUE OF THEIR AUTOMOBILE.

OTHER RURAL HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE HARMED ARE THOSE WHOSE WAGE EARNER HAS BEEN LAID OFF FROM WORK. THE HOUSEHOLD'S INCOME

HAS BEEN DRASTICALLY REDUCED, BUT THE VALUE OF THE AUTOMOBILE THAT WAS USED FOR TRANSPORTATION TO WORK AND IS NOW USED TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES MAY VERY WELL PREVENT THE HOUSEHOLD FROM BEING ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS. IN THESE SITUATIONS, HOUSEHOLDS ARE DENIED FOOD STAMPS WHEN THEY NEED THEM THE MOST.

THE $4,500 FAIR MARKET VALUE LIMIT HAS BEEN IN PLACE SINCE 1977. I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE LIMIT BE INCREASED TO A MORE REASONABLE AMOUNT THAT WOULD REFLECT THE RAPID INFLATION OF THE PAST TWELVE YEARS.

7. <u>Liberalize the Definition of a Food Stamp Household</u>

I HAVE SEEN AN INCREASE OF CLOSE RELATIVES SHARING THE SAME SHELTER, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL VIRGINIA.

FORMER FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT FAMILY MEMBERS ARE SEEKING REFUGE IN THE HOMES OF THEIR AGED PARENTS, ADULT CHILDREN, AND SIBLINGS. UNEMPLOYMENT, UNDEREMPLOYMENT, DISABILITY AND THE LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES ALL CREATE FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS THAT PREVENT THESE INDIVIDUALS FROM MAINTAINING SEPARATE LIVING QUARTERS.

MOST OF THESE HOUSEHOLDS MAY BE EATING TOGETHER, HOWEVER, IN SOME INSTANCES, THESE FAMILY MEMBERS ARE SHARING NO MORE THAN THE ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS. BUT, BECAUSE OF CURRENT FOOD STAMP REGULATIONS, THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD'S INCOME AND

RESOURCES MUST BE CONSIDERED. THE HOMELESS FAMILY MEMBER MUST THEN RELY ON THE WILLINGNESS OF THE REST OF THE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS TO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS AND TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED VERIFICATION. IF THE OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS REFUSE, OR IF THEY HAVE EXCESS INCOME OR RESOURCES, THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD IS DENIED.

CURRENT REGULATIONS ASSUME THAT THE INCOME AND RESOURCES FROM CLOSE RELATIVES LIVING TOGETHER ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO ONE ANOTHER. IDEALLY, WE WOULD ALL LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT IF WE FELL ON HARD TIMES, WE COULD DEPEND UPON OUR FAMILIES FOR HELP AND SUPPORT. REALISTICALLY, WE KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE.

THEREFORE, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLD STATUS BE ALLOWED FOR THOSE ADULT CHILDREN WHO RESIDE WITH THEIR PARENTS AND FOR THOSE ADULT SIBLINGS WHO RESIDE WITH EACH OTHER, BUT DO NOT PURCHASE FOOD AND PREPARE MEALS TOGETHER.

Hunger in Rural America

Statement of the American Association of Retired Persons
Submitted for the Record

to the

Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations
and Nutrition
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture

May 17, 1989

Introduction

The American Association of Retired Persons appreciates this opportunity to address the issue of hunger in rural America. Meeting the needs of vulnerable individuals who reside in our nation's rural areas is a great challenge, and the Association is heartened by the Committee's interest in this issue. We would like to focus our comments on issues pertaining to older rural residents.

There is a lack of good information comparing the nutritional status of older persons in rural and urban areas. It is known, however, that older persons in Southern states have the lowest levels of nutritional intake. This is significant because 43 percent of older rural Americans reside in the South. Otherwise, the best predictor of the likelihood of hunger is economic status.

Economic Status

The rural elderly are more economically disadvantaged than those living in metropolitan areas. Poverty is more than 40 percent higher for older non-metro residents than it is for older metro residents. In 1987, 15.6 percent of non-metro persons 65 and older were poor, compared to 11.1 percent for the metro elderly.

As is true in general, the incidence of poverty among older persons in rural areas increases for certain subgroups. These include women, minorities, the very old and persons who live alone. For example:

- o Almost half (46.5 percent) of older non-metro blacks are poor, compared to 30 percent in metro areas;

- o For older persons who do not live with other family members, 30 percent of those in non-metro areas are poor, compared to 22 percent in metro areas; and

- o A shocking 80 percent of elderly, rural, black women who do not reside with other family members are poor.

Additional data from the 1980 Census indicated:

- o Of older rural women, 27.4 percent were poor compared to 16.7 percent of older rural men; and

- o Forty-three percent of non-metro persons age 85 and over were poor or near poor, compared to 30 percent in metro areas.

Demographics

While a larger number of older persons reside in urban areas,

about one in four older persons live in rural areas. Furthermore, persons 65 and over make up a proportionally greater share of the population in non-metro areas. In many cases, this factor has been shaped by the out-migration of younger persons in economically-depressed rural areas. It is generally true that as population decreases the proportion of elderly persons increases.

In 21 states, a majority of the elderly live in rural areas. In 28 states, two-fifths of the older population resides in rural areas. The largest number of older persons live in the South, where 43 percent of older rural residents live, and the North Central region, where 33 percent of rural elders live. But, whereas in all other regions approximately 13 percent of the rural residents are 65 and over, in the North Central, 17 percent of rural residents are elderly.

Older persons constitute about 12 percent of the U.S. population. However, there are over 500 non-metro counties that far exceed the national average, with nearly 17 percent of their population 65 and over. These are mostly agricultural areas of the Midwest in which there has been an outmigration of young persons. In 178 of these counties, the proportion of the population 65 and over exceeds 20 percent.

Compared to urban elders, those in rural areas are often disadvantaged in areas such as access to health care, transportation and housing, and have fewer formal services and

resources available to them to help meet those needs. These factors, combined with the prevalence of poverty and the high proportion of older persons in rural areas, point to a need for more action to combat the hunger and deprivation faced by too many older rural residents.

There is often an assumption that persons who reside in rural areas can grow their own food and, therefore, require less income and nutritional aid than metro residents. While at one time the majority of persons living in rural America resided on farms and could, in fact, grow a substantial portion of their food, this is no longer the case. It was for this reason that, in 1980, the Census Bureau abolished the farm/non-farm poverty distinction. Furthermore, many older persons in non-metro areas are too frail to grow their own food, even if they had the time and land to do so.

Federal Nutrition Assistance

The Food Stamp Program is the primary form of federal food assistance for low-income Americans. Twenty-one percent of households receiving benefits contain an older member; 1.7 million older individuals participate in the program. While food stamps can provide substantial benefits to low-income persons, participation among older households is very low.

According to a recent study by the Congressional Budget

Office, only 34 to 44 percent of eligible households containing an elderly member receive food stamps. Participation rates among eligible households with children are between 59 and 81 percent.

In 1988, the U.S. General Accounting Office examined reasons for nonparticipation in the Food Stamp Program. It found that half the eligible nonparticipants did not think they were eligible for the program, many because they thought their income or assets were too high. Twenty-seven percent said they did not apply because they were concerned about likely administrative "hassles."

Several actions could facilitate participation in the Food Stamp Program by older persons in rural areas.

1. More outreach is needed to help inform persons of their possible eligibility for the program and to assist them in completing application forms. This is a difficult but necessary task in rural areas in which older persons are more likely to be socially and physically isolated and to lack access to information about programs and services.

   Many older persons are unaware that they can apply for food stamps in the Social Security office which, in some cases, may be more convenient and less stigmatizing than using the welfare office. Although the Food Stamp Act clearly requires Social Security offices to provide

application information and assistance, these provisions of law are not being enforced adequately.

2. Although current regulations indicate that elderly and disabled persons should be given assistance in receiving their food stamp coupons, mail issuance is not explicitly required. This can pose a particular hardship in rural areas where older persons may lack the transportation to travel each month to receive their food stamps. This can pose a significant barrier to participation and should be remedied.

3. Application forms should be simplified and made more understandable so that the application form itself does not become a barrier to participation. In most states, the food stamp application form is now unified with the application form for AFDC. While this may serve a useful purpose for many families, it can cause unnecessary confusion for older persons applying for food stamps. Efforts should be made to ensure that the food stamp application form is easily understandable.

In addition to the Food Stamp Program, commodity assistance such as that provided by the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance program (TEFAP) is an important source of nutritional assistance for older persons. Thirty-eight percent of all households receiving TEFAP commodities contain an older person. Congress

should act to make this program permanent so that TEFAP recipients can be assured of a more stable source of aid.

Although outside the jurisdiction of this committee, the Congregate and Home-Delivered meals programs, authorized by the Older Americans Act, are an important source of nutritional assistance for older persons. These programs are required to maintain spending levels in rural areas at 105 percent, or greater, of their spending level in fiscal year 1978. It is important that states monitor whether this spending floor provides adequate service levels to their rural residents.

The Older Americans Act also is authorized to conduct outreach activities to inform potentially-eligible older persons about Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Food Stamps and Medicaid. This effort requires an appropriation of $10 million in order to be implemented. Such funds could supplement the efforts for outreach that should be conducted through the Food Stamp Program and would be particularly helpful in reaching older persons in need.

Conclusion

While some older persons retire to rural areas and enjoy a comfortable standard of living, many others have been left behind and are trapped in isolation and poverty. Rural elders who are poor or who are frail and isolated are those most likely to

suffer from inadequate diets. Poor nutrition can contribute to declining health and increased frailty among these vulnerable elders. Ensuring that nutritional assistance is readily available to needy persons in rural America is an important goal for Congress to address.

QUESTIONS FROM HON. BILL EMERSON:

QUESTIONS FOR BOB GREENSTEIN

1. YOUR ORGANIZATION'S RECENT REPORT, A PROFILE OF THE RURAL POOR BASED ON THE CENSUS BUREAU DATA, FOUND THAT THE POOR IN RURAL AREAS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN TWO PARENT HOUSEHOLDS, ARE WORKING AND ARE SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO BE ELDERLY. I AM TOLD BY PEOPLE IN MY DISTRICT OPERATING PROGRAMS FOR THE POOR THAT TEFAP IS A MUCH BETTER PROGRAM FOR THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY. DO YOU AGREE?

2. THESE SAME PEOPLE MENTION THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY POOR IN RURAL AREAS. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS ON HOW TO REMOVE THIS STIGMA----OR SHOULD OTHER PROGRAMS BE AVAILABLE?

3. YOUR ORGANIZATION ALSO RECENTLY RELEASED A REPORT ON HOUSING AND ITS EFFECT ON POVERTY LEVELS. YOU CITED DATA THAT INDICATED THAT 45% OF POOR RENTERS PAY AT LEAST 70% OF THEIR INCOMES FOR HOUSING. CAN YOU PROVIDE THE SUBCOMMITTEE WITH INFORMATION ON RURAL HOUSING COSTS AND WHETHER THE CONCLUSIONS IN THE OVERALL HOUSING REPORT ARE TRUE FOR RURAL AREAS AS WELL.

4. WHAT ELEMENTS OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PRESENT BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION BY THE RURAL POOR AND WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO THE PROGRAM----BEARING IN MIND THAT WE ALREADY HAVE A TERRIBLY COMPLICATED PROGRAM.

ANSWERS FROM BOB GREENSTEIN

1. The question of whether TEFAP or food stamps is a better program is a complex one. Let me offer several thoughts on this.

The Congress has established the food stamp program as the basic food assistance program for poor people in the U.S. I believe this decision makes sense. The food stamp program offers flexibility by allowing low income households to choose those foods they find most appropriate for their households. TEFAP, by contrast, is constrained by being limited to those food items which happen to be in surplus, along with those few additional food items that can be purchased in limited quantities with funds that Congress may elect to provide for such purposes.

While some TEFAP recipients may have become used to receiving a substantial amount of food through the program, we should remember that the years when TEFAP was at its peak were unusual years in that agricultural surpluses were atypically large. If agricultural policy works properly, surpluses of this nature should be more the exception than the norm.

You note that some low income groups, particularly the elderly, may find TEFAP preferable to food stamps. While this should not be surprising, the reasons for this preference should be clearly understood. I believe that much more than avoidance of stigma is involved here.

In the food stamp program, benefit levels relate to income: the higher your income, the lower your benefit. TEFAP does not work in this fashion, however. Bags of food or blocks of cheese cannot be cut into various size fractions depending on a recipient's income level. As a result, *all* eligible recipients receive a full TEFAP food package, *regardless of their income level.*

The consequence is that for eligible households whose incomes are close to or slightly above the poverty line, the TEFAP program often provides a benefit larger than the food stamp program. This is particularly true for the elderly.

In general, low income elderly people on SSI and/or Social Security have incomes close to or above the poverty line, and are somewhat "better of" than typical poor households that are not elderly. These low income elderly households frequently qualify for a food stamp benefit of only $10 to $20 per household per month. TEFAP, by offering a full food package for each person, can provide a substantially larger benefit precisely because it is not targeted by income status.

This is reflected in USDA data on the incomes of food stamp and TEFAP recipients. On average TEFAP recipients have higher incomes than food stamp recipients, although both programs serve low income populations.

2. The question of how to reduce food stamp stigma in rural areas is a tough one. I don't have an easy answer.

I do believe, however, that the demonstration projects which are testing the replacement of food stamp coupons with an electronically coded card offer some promise

here. As you know, an approach of this nature was tested in Reading, Pennsylvania. Recipients received cards that were coded with the recipients' monthly food stamp benefit amounts. Each time the recipient purchased food, the card was run through a device sitting on the check-out counter, and the amount of the purchase was subtracted. This process continued until the card showed that the recipient's monthly benefits had been used up. While this approach is far from problem-free, recipients in Reading generally preferred it to use of food stamp coupons. It may be a partial remedy to the stigma problem, if it is ultimately found feasible for widespread use. USDA is now expanding the pilot tests into this approach to providing food stamp benefits.

3. I'm pleased to provide what information we can on rural housing costs. The Center is currently working on a major study on the housing conditions of the rural poor, which we hope will be ready for release by the early fall.

Our recent national housing report, to which you referred, is based on newly published data from the Census Bureau and HUD. As you noted, these data show that 45 percent of poor renters in the U.S. pay at least 70 percent of their incomes for housing. Unfortunately, Census and HUD have not published data that break out the housing costs for poor renters and for poor homeowners in the nonmetropolitan U.S. The metro/nonmetro data that have been published provide housing cost information for *all* of the rural poor, but do not provide information on poor renters as distinguished from poor homeowners. We are currently working with the Harvard Center on Housing, which can "run" the Census tapes, to obtain the information you requested. I will provide it when it becomes available.

The data that have been published by Census and HUD show the following:

Nationally, 39.2 percent of all poor households (including both renters and homeowners) paid at least 70 percent of income for housing in 1985. In the nonmetropolitan U.S., some 26.4 percent of all poor households paid at least 70 percent of income for housing.

If we examine those poor households that pay at least half of their incomes for housing, we find that nationally, 56.6 percent of all the poor (including both renters and owners) paid at least half of their incomes for housing. In the non-metro U.S., 42.3 percent of all poor households paid at least half of their incomes for housing.

Finally, if we examine those poor households that pay at least 30 percent of income for housing, we find that 80 3 percent of all poor households -- and 72.1 percent of poor non-metro households -- pay at least 30 percent of income for housing. These last figures are particularly significant, because housing is considered affordable for a poor household, under HUD standards, if it consumes no more than 30 percent of household income. Thus, nearly three of every four poor rural households bear housing costs outside the affordable range.

These data show that the rural poor bear very high housing cost burdens, although the cost burdens of the urban poor are even more severe than those of the rural poor. But

I would caution that these data should *not* be read to mean that housing problems are more serious for the urban poor than for the rural poor. For while housing cost burdens, on average, are higher for the urban poor, the incidence of substandard housing is higher for the rural poor. The rural poor appear to get lower quality housing for their money. In 1985, one in every four rural poor households -- and about 30 percent of all rural poor renters -- lived in substandard housing.

Finally, the fact that the housing burdens of the rural poor are not quite so high as those of the urban poor -- when both groups are considered as a whole -- may be due in significant part to the greater prevalence of elderly poor homeowners among the rural poor. Elderly poor homeowners are likely to have paid off their mortgages and, hence, their housing costs are likely to be lower than those of poor renters. When data become available on rural poor renters, I suspect we will find that their housing cost burdens are very high.

4. I would suggest consideration of several changes:

- Examining USDA rules regarding mail issuance of food stamps to ensure these rules are not discouraging the use of mail issuance in rural areas where it would be more cost-effective than some alternative means of issuance that may currently be in use. Mail issuance appears to be effective in reducing barriers to participation among the rural poor.

- Taking action to ensure that food stamp applicants and participants can continue to apply for Social Security numbers at the food stamp office, as they have been able to do for years. I am concerned that procedural changes being implemented by the Social Security Administration may lead many jurisdictions to end this practice, with the result that applicants and participants in rural areas could have to travel long distances to district Social Security offices as part of the food stamp application process. This is the opposite of one-stop shopping.

- Examining the impact in rural areas of new federal rules requiring all adult household members to sign the food stamp application (rather than just the responsible adult member submitting the application, as has been done in the past).

- Considering the reinstitution of some minimum federal standards for location and hours of operation of food stamp offices. Federal rules to this effect, promulgated in 1980, set minimal standards with which most rural and urban jurisdictions were already in compliance. However, these standards were helpful in some rural areas where the level of service was so low that serious barriers to participation were created.

  These rules were dropped after Senator Helms secured a change in law in 1981 that deleted the statutory requirement for such a standard. This issue could be reconsidered.

- Finally, I believe current vehicle assets limits pose a barrier to participation in rural areas. I would support the recommendation in the Public Voice report that the vehicle assets limit be waived for vehicles used to transport fuel or water for households lacking piped in fuel or indoor running water. In addition, given the necessity of having a vehicle for transportation in rural areas, I believe the $4,500 market value limit on the resource exclusion for vehicles needs to be raised or, at a minimum, adjusted for inflation so that it does not erode further in the future. This limit was originally set by the Congress in 1977 to keep out households with luxury vehicles (i.e., "welfare Cadillacs"). It has not been adjusted since, while the Consumer Public Index for used cars has risen 120 percent since 1977.

  I recognize that this issue was considered by the Committee in 1985. I would point out that since 1985, the CPI for used cars has risen further, so that the $4,500 limit is now more restrictive than it was in 1985.

5. I believe there are two aspects to this problem. Helping those rural households that are employed but are still in poverty is a task that I believe to be largely out of the reach of the food stamp program. Assisting these households primarily entails expanding the earned income tax credit, raising the minimum wage, providing assistance with child care expenses, and providing access to health insurance.

On the other hand, I believe the food stamp employment and training program can be helpful to those of the rural poor who are unemployed, marginally employed, or underemployed. As noted in my testimony, lack of adequate education and basic skills is a major contributing factor to unemployment and poverty in many rural areas.

This suggests the importance of including basic skills components as an integral part of the food stamp employment and training program. This would be consistent with last year's welfare reform legislation, which stresses basic skills (and requires states to provide literacy instruction for AFDC recipients who have not graduated from high school and lack basic literacy). I think we need to be clear that job search alone is not sufficient for food stamp recipients lacking in literacy or other basic skills.

QUESTIONS FOR ELLEN HAAS

1. YOUR RECENT REPORT---GAINING GROUND; A FOOD POLICY AGENDA FOR THE RURAL POOR---MADE SEVERAL RECOMMENDATION TO ALTER THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. HOWEVER, WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE ARE PROPOSALS TO MERGE THE SEVERAL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES. DIFFERING RULES AND REGULATIONS COMPLICATE, ALREADY COMPLICATED PROGRAMS. THIS MAY PROVE TO BE ESPECIALLY TROUBLESOME FOR THE RURAL POOR BECAUSE OF LONG DISTANCES THEY MUST TRAVEL. YOU KNOW THAT I SUPPORT A ONE-STOP-SHOPPING CONCEPT FOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND I BELIEVE THAT A RURAL AREA WOULD BE THE BEST PLACE TO TEST THIS CONCEPT. DO YOU AGREE?

2. YOUR REPORT ALSO DISCUSSES WHAT I MENTIONED EARLIER AND WAS DESCRIBED TO ME AS THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM. HOW WOULD YOU REMOVE THIS STIGMA? CAN IT BE DONE? OR SHOULD WE MAKE OTHER PROGRAMS, SUCH AS TEFAP, AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM.

3. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PRESENT FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WERE DESIGNED WITH URBAN POOR IN MIND, RATHER THAN THE RURAL POOR?

(Ms. Haas' answers were not submitted at time of printing.)